

INTRODUCTION

STUDY AREA

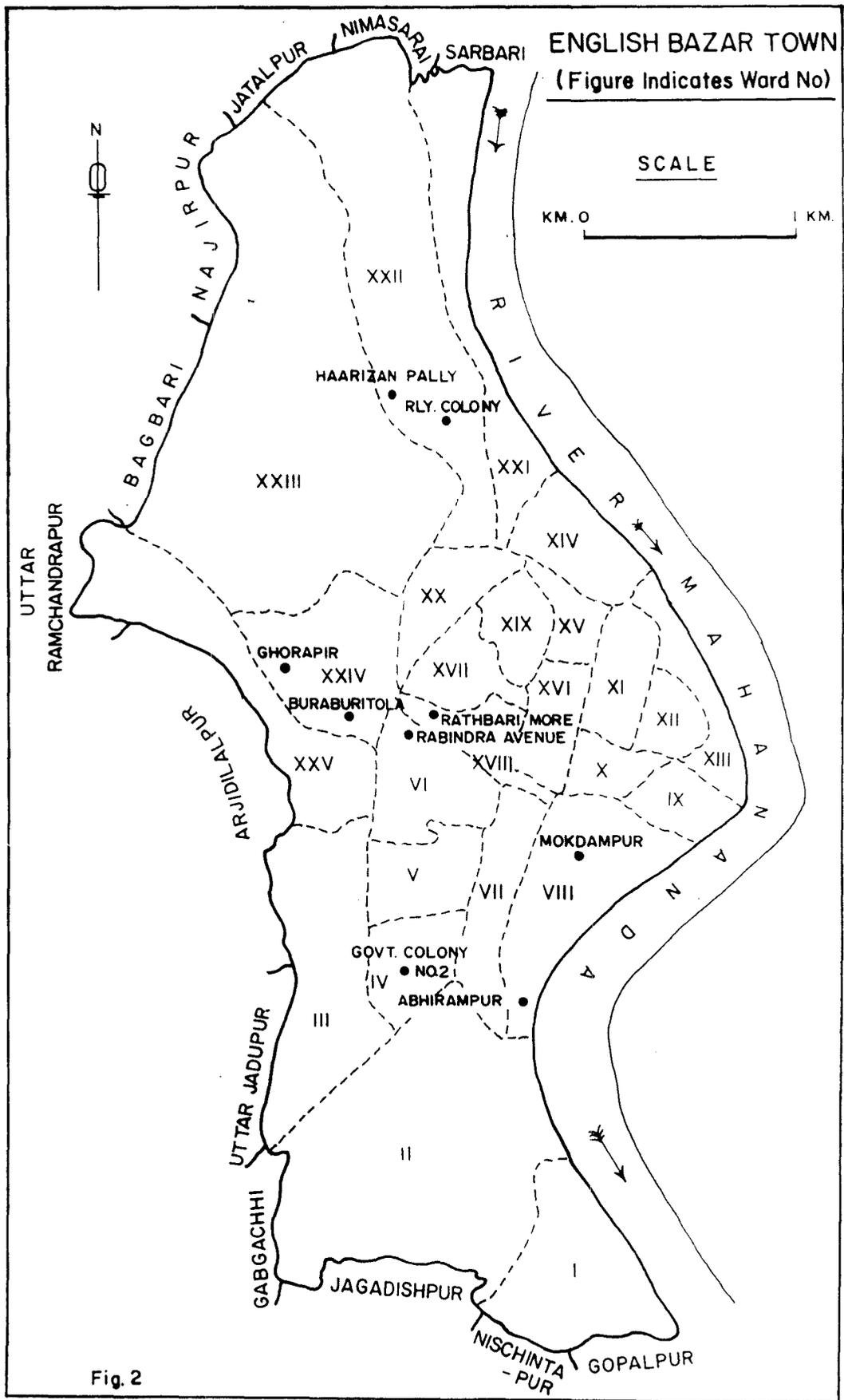
English Bazar town, head quarters of Malda District is a class I town in census category and is included in the Jalpaiguri Division. The town is one of the oldest in Bengal and was established in the year 1869. It is situated at 25°0' N latitudes and 88°9' E longitudes (Census, 1961). The town is elongated in a north-south alignment along the National Highway 34 and the river Mahananda (Fig. 1). The area of the town was 4.63km² upto 1983-84. But it's present area is 13.25km². The recent extension of the town has been taken place in the western direction taking an advantage of vacant land at a low price for residential purposes and also nearer to the centre point of the town. The town at present is divided into 24 municipality wards. (Fig.2).

Topographically the town is almost flat and on the levee of the river Mahananda. The town, about 200 km. north of Calcutta is located almost at the middle point in the State of West Bengal. it is a gateway of North Bengal from South Bengal and vice versa. The town is connected with Calcutta, Delhi and other parts of India by railways.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA

The present headquarters of the district known as English Bazar has however, originated from the factory built by the East India Company to carry on trade mainly in silk and cotton textiles. The town which gradually developed around the factory in course of time came to be known in those days as "Englezaved". The name Englezaved was later on converted to English Bazar which was mentioned by Hunter in his book as one of the five towns thriving in the whole region of North Bengal. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton, visiting the region in about 1810, found English Bazar emerging as a town and was highly impressed with the appearance of it with its excellent roads at least one of them being wide and straight along with many wood houses closely built resembled a city of Europe than most of the country towns of Bengal. (Hunter 1876).

From then English Bazar has started developing in size, population and activities, emerging as one of the leading towns of the region today. Apart from being the administrative headquarters of the district and acting as the gateway to South - Bengal and Bihar it is also the cultural capital of the district which is reflected in its fast growth. English Bazar is the administrative head quarters of Malda District. Its origin goes back to early colonial rule when it emerged as a trade centre,



taking part in the riverine trade of the region. The English administrators established their factors here and some of the old buildings still exist to remind one of its glorious past. In the early part of the nineteenth century the place is referred to as one of the leading towns of Bengal having beautiful houses (Hamilton). The growth of the town since then has remained uninterrupted, the population has been increasing in almost every decade putting pressure on the available facilities of the town. One of such basic facilities is housing which has become more scarce with increase of population. The situation has become more acute since the partition of Bengal when a large number of people migrated from adjoining districts of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) have come to settle down in the town which was the nearest one in those days of early fifties to attract the migrants.

The major objective of this study is to make an assessment of the housing situation and problem in this growing urban centre which lies at the cross roads of the most important arterial roads (National Highways and State Highways) and railways across the Ganga giving direct access to north and south has already surveyed into a city. Having been located at a place very close to Bangladesh and Bihar on the one hand and Calcutta Industrial Belt and the rest of the North Bengal on the other English Bazar commands a unique geographical location. The significance has increased further in recent decades with the establishment of the giant Farakka Thermal Power Station and the Railway Administrative Complexes.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. Over population due to rapid growth of population.
2. Uneven distribution of socio-economic functions.
3. Insufficient amenities to serve the large people.
4. Trade Centre of this district as well as North Bengal.
5. Communication system within the town is poor,
6. Unplanned town,
7. No proper plan is implemented,
8. Need some plans after proper study of English Bazar Town.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study are as follows :

1. To evaluate location, Physical set-up, Population structure, Occupational pattern, Landuses and socio-economic functions in the town.
2. To identify and examine the existing socio-economic functions and other amenities available in the town for the people and to analyse their maximum utilization.
3. To find out the functional and spatial gaps on the basis of population and other factors and to suggest various plans for the development of different amenities and associated functions.
4. To find out the problems for development and to evaluate various earlier strategies adopted in India and abroad for the development of urban areas and to suggest the most relevant strategy for the development of the town and for optimum utilization of existing infrastructure.
5. Finally to suggest a Master Plan for the development of the town in general and the people in particular.

METHODOLOGY

As regards source materials, a good number of published reports, gazetteers, old reports and books have been consulted for strengthening the profile of the thesis. The work is largely based on field investigation, supplemented by primary as well as secondary data and information available from various sources. Field survey was started in the middle of 1996 and it was continued till the middle of 1998. In this connection very wide-ranging enquiries have been made at different offices and establishments.

The data were collected through personal enquiries by questionnaires done in every municipal ward of the town. Data collected from door to door survey has been tabulated and analysed. The various types of maps were prepared for analysis the data and information. Different statistical techniques were used for analysis the data and information.

To get the correct result from the different types of data, the help of computer is taken and these are analysed in different chapters in appropriate places. Different

statistical techniques are taken into consideration for analysis the data and information.

DESIGN OF THE THESIS

The thesis contains in all, eight chapters. It is a complete picture of English Bazar Municipality. With the help of the manual maps, charts, tables from the real data the following chapters are formulated.

First Chapter — Population and demographic pattern of the town.

Second Chapter — Landuse and its changes,

Third Chapter — Urban amenities and their distribution.

Fourth Chapter — Identification of Major Problems in the town.

Fifth Chapter — Determination of Spatial and functional gaps.

Sixth Chapter — Analysis of Developmental Strategies

Seventh Chapter — Development and Planning.

Eighth Chapter — Suggestions and Conclusions.

LIMITATIONS

(a) Regarding the landuse, observations have been made by the eye-estimation, visiting different areas in the town and by analysing the works on landuse pattern carried on previously.

(b) Due to insufficiency of published data, the data were collected on different aspects of socio-economic functions with the help of questionnaires and sampling.

(c) Field observations at different times were conducted and different offices and organisations also were visited.

(d) Due to large number of households in the town it was not possible to cover all the families for interview under different aspects of questionnaire made for the study. So 20 to 30 percent sample survey of the total households in a ward randomly have been taken into consideration for interview. So a large portion of the households have been remaining left out of the domain of the study.