

CHAPTER – II

CONCEPTUAL FRAME OF LOCATION OF BARASAT TOWN

INTRODUCTION:

The term fringe is defined as the land surrounding the town which is not considered as a part of it but whose use is influenced directly by the town (Keeble, Lewis, 1964). The above statement explains the principles and practice of town and country planning. The urban centres develop first, fringe emerges later. Excepting some planned towns, most of the urban centres do not appear all on a sudden. Urbanisation is a two-way process. Number one, for convenience of transport or for some economic activity, a part of area experiences a concentration of population. It is a core area. It receives its life blood from the adjacent areas. It is a core-periphery concept (Fig-2.1). Next, somehow a concentration of population happens to take place in an area. It is self sufficient by its own merit and does not depend upon adjacent areas for its sustenance. That is to say, its dependence is comparatively less. It begins to influence the surrounding areas and change the nature of it. In the first case, the core area acquires an urban flavour, but in the second case, the out laying area retains a rural flavour. A fringe gradually becomes inseparable from parent urban centre. It is never an appendix but becomes an intergral part of the town.

The study area is the municipal town itself, but the town extends outwards incorporating some fringe mouzas into it. Geographical contiguity is the most important factor no doubt, but additional areas must have shown certain characteristic of urban centres. The study of urbanization remains

incomplete without studying the emergence and development of these areas, which are called fringe. The later section of this chapter deals with fringe of the town.

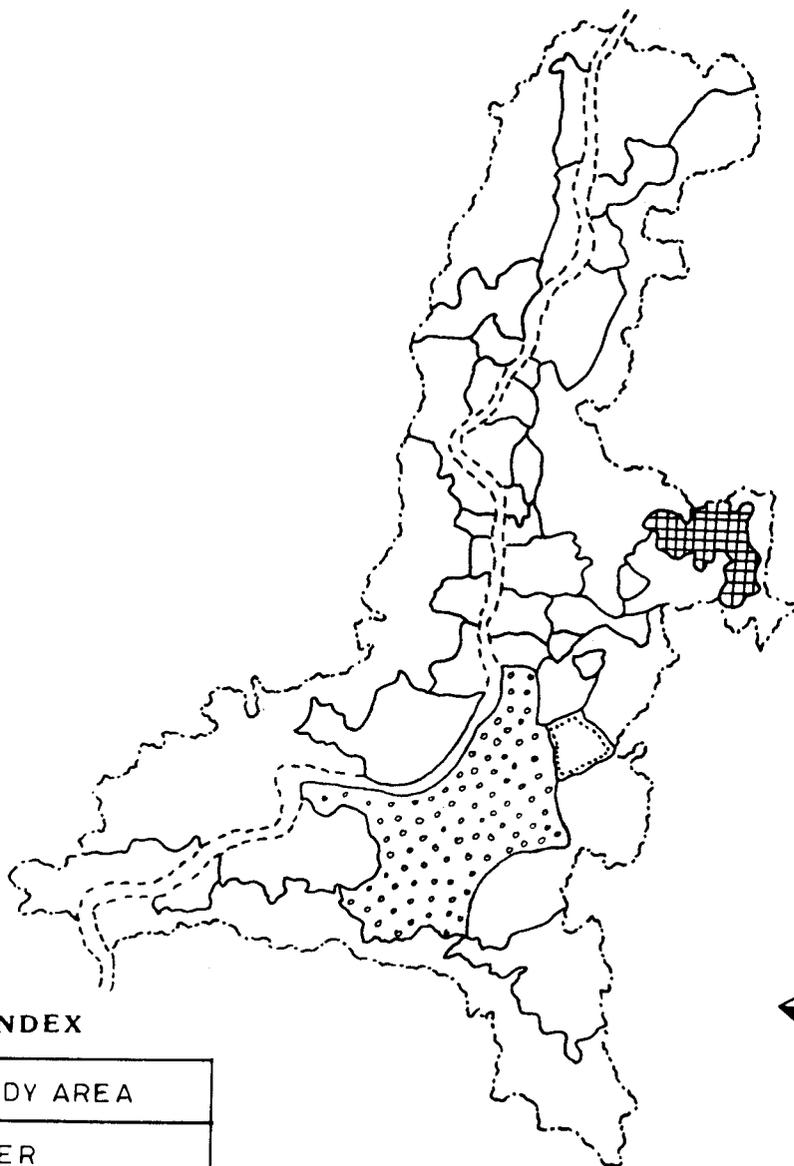
2.1 IDENTIFICATION OF THE FRINGE:

In nature, bright day light merges into darkness through fading twilight, so in the process of settlement the high concentration of population gradually becomes thinner; the urban settlement passes through an intermediate zone which is neither urban nor rural. It is a fringe zone, in geographical term. Mayers, (1947) considered the urban fringe as the zone between the country and the city. But Mayer's concept of fringe fails short of characteristics though identification is correct. In this respect the present investigator prefers Andrews (1942) to Mayers. Andrews identifies the rural urban fringe as "that area adjoining the economic city in which there is an intermingling of characteristically agricultural and characteristically urban land uses".

On analysis two points come out, i) it is outside the core economic activity of the cityland ii) land use pattern resembles partly rural agricultural and partly urban, may be in commercial, housing etc. Wherwein (1967) closely follows Andrews (1942). He too identifies it as transition zone between well recognised urban landuses and areas devoted to agriculture. He thinks that fringe is a border area outside the city between the area of urban and rural landuse, an intermediate zone which shares the characteristics of both.

The Indian population, a substantial portion of it will gravitate towards cities. This may be effected by two ways: (a) Expanding the city areas by

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0 8 KM
SCALE

Fig.-21

engulfing the urban fringe etc. and (b) Elevating the thriving rural areas into municipal status. In India both the processes are, simultaneously working as will be evident by the rise of number of municipal towns and by the addition of new wards in the old towns or cities. The urban and rural population often have contrasting characters by different occupations, socio-economic value systems, degree of socio-economic awakening, level of socio-economic interaction etc. The area is partly assimilated in the growing urban complex. The residents live in the fringe areas and commute to the city, but are not socially and culturally part of it. Infrastructural level of facilities is also a factor. In India, all statutory towns, i.e. all places with municipal corporations, cantonment boards or notified areas are treated as urban.

Barasat, a sub-division town, later declared as a district town since 1986, present a unique concept. It is a suburb of the metropolitan city of Calcutta. It is intrinsically linked to Calcutta in culture, economy and transport etc. By administrative declaration it is a part of Calcutta Metropolitan Area (CMA) (Fig 2.1) composing of the eastern part of it at the middle. Dobrinor (1958) considered that, suburbs are those urbanised residential communities which lie outside the corporate limits of a large city but are culturally, and economically depend upon the central city. According to the census 1961, places which have a density of population of at least 400 per km² and 75% of their main working population engaged in non-agricultural activities are treated as urban centre. It is not within the core area of CMA but an area in the out lying part of the CMA (Fig 2.1). It is situated only 25 kms. away from the city of Calcutta connected by railways and roadways. Improved accessibility of the study area has contributed a lot towards its rapid growth. Since Barasat is one of the oldest municipalities and by virtue of its location it merits a different way of study. Any upheaval of

Calcutta is bound to affect the town and surrounding rural urban fringe. (Fig. 2.2).

Duncun & Reiss (1956) properly suggested that rural urban fringe refers to that area in which the country side is in the process of transition from rural to urban mode of settlement. On 1995, some fringe areas of Barasat municipality are incorporated. Therefore, the outlying non municipal areas are in diminishing volume. Some of the parameters of fringe have been identified by the investigator. Wherwein (1942) lays special emphasis on landuses. In his opinion, fringe is the area of mixed landuses lying beyond those section of the city are customarily serviced by urban utilities and transport system. He says it is an area of transition between well recognised urban landuses and the area devoted to agriculture. Smith (1937) says it is a built up area just outside the corporate limit of the city. He lays emphasis on boundary limits; but Gaplin (1915) introduces another term "*Rurban*" – a mixture of rural and urban features. He speaks of a composite nature.

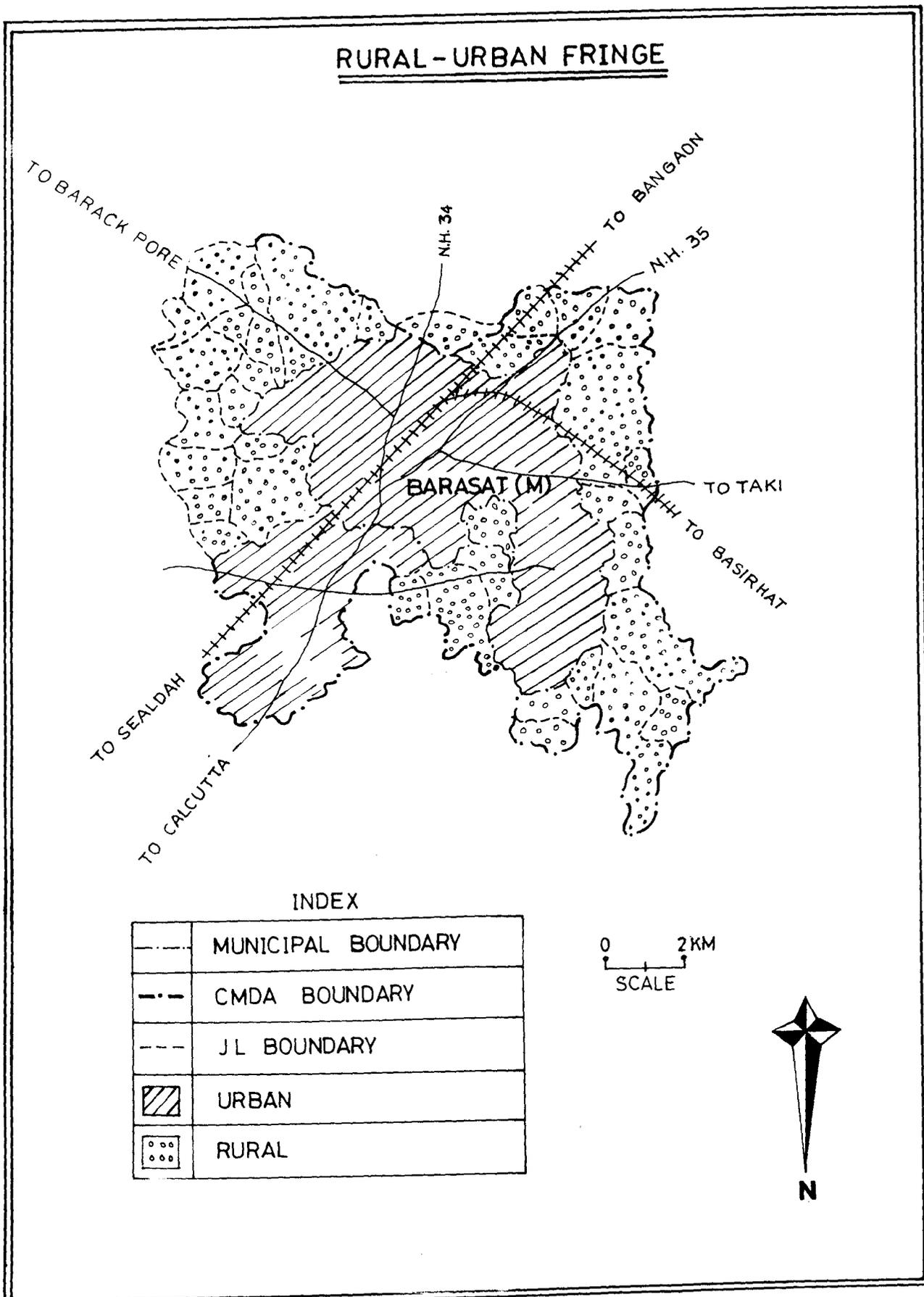
Andrews (1942) properly considered the new differentiation between urban fringe and rural urban fringe. The urban fringe is the active expanding sector of a compact economic city and rural urban fringe lies adjacent to the periphery of the urban fringe. Alpake (1942) emerged into the debate. He defines the urban fringe that cultural development that take place outside the boundaries of central cities and extend to the area of predominantly agricultural activities. Dewey (1948) considered it from demographic point of view – "In the fringe area there is mingling of people some of whom work in and are oriented towards agriculture while at the same time the remainder pursue urban occupations and an urban way of life".

Balk (1945) added a new term '*Rurbanisation*', i.e. rural area being urbanised. Pryor (1968) says urban fringe exhibit a density of occupied dwelling higher than the medium density of the total rural urban fringe and the higher rate of increase in population density, landuse conversion and community. By contrasts, the rural fringe exhibits lower rate of increase.

In the developing countries a slight change is noticed while the areas closer to the cities are affected by changes in the cities and they provide permanent labour force by migration or temporary labour force. They do not stay in the city for long, they earn and came back once/twice a month combined hands are of course daily commuters. The parameters have been delineated – (a) landuse; (b) population density; (c) migration of people; (d) civic amenities.

The railway route extends from Barasat to Hasnabad. These are predominantly rural areas, Hence Barasat is a bridge between Deganga, Basirhat, Hasnabad, Sandesh khali and metropolitan Calcutta along with its adjoining municipalities. It serves as a buffer between the rural areas down to Barasat and the spillover population of Calcutta and CMA. It absorbs a greater part of migrant refugees from Bangladesh. Chandna (1994) suggests the Indian urbanisation is subsistence in nature. That is migrants from rural areas are attached to the urban centres not for urban environment but for employment. With the notification of Barasat as district Head Quarter (1986) new occupational opportunities will come up and these are tertiary level of occupations. The study area provides a scope to explore this possibility.

RURAL - URBAN FRINGE



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▨	URBAN
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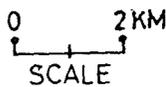


Fig-2:2



Plate - 7. A fringe area dominated by agriculture.

2.2 CHARACTER OF THE FRINGE AREA:

According to the authoritative views, the fringe areas are neither urban nor rural. It is an intermediate zone. The city extends for its own needs, the rural recedes leaving behind some of its characteristics and succumbing to the forces of accelerated economic growth. It is a step ahead towards urbanisation.

The fringe is over taken by the extension of housing estates of buildings along the main arterial roads first. Residents, in moving from his native house through road ways and railways, can notice the change and can assume that from here village changes – the main city is not far off. The development of fringe depends upon several interacting social and economic forces. Of course the primary cause is the expansion of the city but before the city exhausts its capacity the trends for the developing of the fringe area may begin earlier. The transportation is the secondary cause. On both sides of the arterial roads the rural face vanishes, first way side hotels, tea shops etc. spring up to meet the needs of labours and truck drivers, then fuelling stations follow. The insatiable thirst of the city for space result in the development of residential areas along the roads. Other inducements are cheap land, absence of land use restrictions, the population control hazards, other laws which forbid the setting up of industries in the heart of the city. Other legal and institutional factors force the slaughter houses, ware houses, oil storage depots, pollutant industries to move out of the city area but not very far from it. Moreover amusement parks, exhibition grounds, residential schools and college, water works, treatment plants, air ports etc. have led to fringe development. These abound the fringe areas.

2.3 ROLE OF FRINGE AREA IN URBANISATION :

The nature of the fringe is more urban than rural and the scale outweighs the rural in terms of economics, culture, population character etc. A purely urban center can stand on its own by virtue of its greater purchasing capacity. A rural area can also be independent of urban centres at the cost of its backwardness. But a fringe can not be thought of without urban support of rural thrust. It is a product of the urbanisation process. It is never an accident of history.

Fringe releases the tension of the urban centre. The city can hold as much, as long as it can. When stagnation is reached it releases some of its population, some of its institutions (Industry, whole-sale market centre, the centre of ancillary industries etc) to the adjoining area. They are not only pushed out of the city – they outpace or diminish the rural influence. At first, the people of the area are out paced by the greater purchasing capacity of the new comers and move towards interiors.

Other functions of the urbanisation do also take place. The degree of urbanization in an area is a fair index of the level of its socio-economic development. A fringe serve as a transition point between the urban and rural. The economy of the rural area through its agriculture output is heavily dependent upon the city. The city may be far off from the different sectors of the village, the fringe being intermediate between the rural and city serve as centre for whole sale out let. For cost factors and others, the articles of the city penetrate the rural areas from the fringe areas which serve as distribution centre.

Fringe areas show changes in landscape, housing pattern, available civic facilities, economic life etc. On the other hand, it unwillingly accommodates the difficulties of both the core city and the rural areas. It tends to develop slums, water logging, unattended roads, water supply system and the type of unemployment move in the pattern of cities than that of village.

Jenus, the Greek God, has two faces – one looking forward and the other looking backward. The fringe resembles that; it is turning towards the city and towards the rural areas. But like the proverbial two queens of a king the emotional attachment is more towards the core city.

Generally a fringe dies and dies itself to merge with the core area. The core area expands, new fringe develops in the hitherto rural areas.

For us, the fringe of the study area is identified along Barrackpore-Barasat road. The following mouzas Sodepur, Anantapur, Chaturia, Abdalpur, Kuberpur, Bara, Pargachha etc. show the characteristic of fringe. The Sealdaha - Bangaon section presents a mixed picture. From Barasat to Sealdaha, the entire area is Habra, Ashoknagar, Gobardanga and Bangaon municipal areas, which still retain rural flavour. Along the Taki road, just beyond municipal limits, there are areas which are more rural than urban. The land use pattern is agriculture in nature. These areas supply vegetables to the core area.

CONCLUSION:

If a city gradually expands, fringe appears. Fringe gradually loses its character and becomes a part of the city. While studying urbanisation, the

investigator emphasises that the fringe areas also get mixed population. It is composed of persons who stayed there earlier and who came there either from the city or from remote areas. Mixed economic activity is predominated from the earlier period. But those who are coming from the city or from remote areas usually switch over to newer occupations. The population of the fringe areas are mostly composed of middle income groups. An interaction takes place. The civic amenities demand new orientations. The adjoining chapter shows how the study area first developed fringe and then engulfed it. Any city planning will have to address the problems of the fringe. Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority and C.M.P.O. have detailed plans to develop the areas so as to avoid problems arising out of them later on. The plans of population and their feasibility are to be discussed in the next chapter.

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