

## CHAPTER – IX

### CONCLUSION

On the basis of the study, it can be concluded that the study area did not arise out of a planned manner, like Kalyani or Rajarhat notified area. It developed in unplanned steps. The town, its future development in the perspective of the Calcutta Metropolitan Area, sought attention of the administrators, geographers, town planners and the people living in the area. From another point of view it can be assumed that a study of Barasat town can provide broad guide lines for the future development of the neighbouring areas.

The earlier part of the study deals with the history of the area. It has a history before the British settled in Bengal. It started as a tiny hamlet with typical Bengal village type with dug up tanks for drinking water, the indigenous system of drainage to clear water, small village roads for busy villagers, agricultural plots outside the dwelling areas. The river *Sunti* and other spill canals were the main out lets. Slowly and gradually the settlement passed into the eighteenth century.

The British came after the battle of Palassy (1757 A.D.). The British nobles preferred the area for its bracing climate, built some palatial buildings. With then modern administrative processes emerged. It started as a district headquater. By an order of 1823; the 30<sup>th</sup> of July a separate magistracy was created. For about 40 years it continued to be the one of the two fiscal divisions of the then 24 Parganas. In March, 1961 it was reduced to a subdivision.

In 1986, 1<sup>st</sup> March, through the recommendation of Administrative Reforms Commission, it became the administrative headquater of a new district i.e. Uttar 24 Parganas, the whole district being divided into Uttar and Dakshin.

These were structural changes. In the meantime the town was gradually swelling. The partition of India, saw the wave of immigration from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The immigration still continues – with this swelling of population emerged new problems of space, livelihood, drinking water, sanitation and a host of other problems like education, sewage, pollution etc. The town is a suburb of the metropolitan city of Calcutta. The fringe town is identified as a transition zone between well recognised urban land use and the areas devoted to agriculture. The town of Barasat is lying along the Taki road, Barasat-Barrackpore road, Jessore road (N.H. 35), Krishnanagar road (N.H.34) and Barasat-Bangaon and Barasat-Basirhat rail line etc. Due to the rapid growth of urbanisation the fringe areas are gradually losing their rural flavour. The homogeneity of population is being lost. New fringe area appears, so men from rural areas settle in the fringe zone for better amenities. Thus these fringes release the tension of the urban centre. Some of city's institutions (industry, market centre, centres for ancillary industry etc.) have moved outside and thus have upset the rural characteristics. These areas are now receiving attention.

From the demographer's view point population of any area is not always a burden. In some cases it is considered as human resources. In the present study various factors related to population and its growth have been discussed. In the first part population characteristics involving distribution of population in Barasat town are studied. In this aspect it is shown that high

numbers of population are noticed 4 wards which is only 26% of the total number of wards. But 20% of the wards has very low population. As regards of index growth of population during 1901-1991, very high rate of growth exist in the year 1991, i.e. 1189%. Between 1961 to 1991 the index of growth jumped, thus upsetting the municipal services. Between 1911 to 1921 there was a decline in the growth rate i.e. 95.1%. It was an all India trend. Influenza, Malaria were widespread and depopulation was noticed. The year of 1947 witnessed partition of India. The Noakhali massacre. The district of Khulna a Hindu majority district, the district of Jessore having a substantial Hindu population got uprooted and took shelter in the border town and after that for searching their livelihood people came to near by subdivisional town Barasat. For that reason rate of growth jumped from 185.6% to 339.14% during 1941-51 and during 1951-61. So far as distribution of wards in different categories of index of growth of population during 1971-81 is concerned maximum index of growth increased in 3 out of 15 wards i.e. 20% of the ward. In this context rate of index growth of population during 1971-91, shows a very low figure i.e. below 100% in ward II, and ward XIII enjoys very high rate of growth of population i.e., above 400%. This unequal changes of index of growth can be attributed to the local factors.

The decadal variation of population of Barasat town reveals that the rate of increase during the year 1901-11 was 1.81% and the figure during the year 1951-61 was 39.98%. Communal flare up of the neighbouring country is one of the important reasons for the massive fluctuation of the growth rates. According to the ward wise variation of decadal increase of population during 1981-91 was 54.36%. As per variation of population density in the town during 1901-91 reveals that from 1901-31 the population density showed little variation from 426 to 428 with a break in 1921. After that density of population rapidly increases during 1941-61. This increase

was due to partition of the country. The population density had risen to 5070 in 1991 and 5135 in 1997 (1997 data is not census figure). There are various factors like declaration of Barasat as a district headquater.. Created job opportunities, booming of construction activities may be the causes of the sharp rise of population.

Barasat has became a nodal point for transportation. As a junction place of two national highways and two important link roads is the special feature of this district town. No agro based and heavy mineral industry is situated in the Barasat town. Population composition has also been studied in terms of sex ratio, literacy-illiteracy, scheduled tribes, religious composition etc. Other features of population composition like place of birth of inhabitants, classification of immigrants by their period of living, occupational pattern, place of work of inhabitants, occupation of the people, workers and non workers and finally income pattern of the people of Barasat town have also been discussed.

The town was neither an industrial centre nor did it arise all on a sudden, still it shows a low sex-ratio favouring male over female. It is observed that ratio of females per thousand males has been increased during the last two decades 1971-91.

So far as scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population are concerned that most of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population are concentrated in wards number IX, XII, XIV and XV. Literacy is of the important aspects for the development of any society. In that point of view education in every developed or under developed or developing country is on a priority list for social, political and economic development. The town has a literacy of 66% in 1991, it is above the national average (52.21% in 1991). In

the early part of this century notable educationists spread their thoughts and ideas among the people of the town. The first girl's school of mofussil Bengal was established here (Chatterjee, P 1963). The Barasat Government high school and literary association were established in 1846 and 1913 respectively. Now it is a district town, eradication programme of illiteracy has been developed in every part of the town. According to index of literacy growth during 1971-91 in Barasat town reveals that maximum growth above 300% covered 5 out of 15 wards but minimum 150% of growth is noticed in 2 wards only.

As regards primary education of Barasat town the picture is hopeful. After 1991 various steps are taken by the government level and social organisations for eradication of illiteracy in the different wards of the municipal area. During the last fifteen years 24 new primary schools are set up. Other categories of schools have also increased.

As regards total population is concerned nearly three fourths of the total population of Hindu community and nearly one fourth of Muslim population are settled in the town. Communal flare up of the neighbouring country is one of the important factors for this fluctuation. Bangladesh border is only 30 kms away from the town. Any type of communal tension in the border region changes the picture of the different religious community of the town.

Another interesting point is, only 26.87% of the population have born in Barasat and 3.66% in Calcutta. People born elsewhere but settled in Barasat comprise 50.34%, 3.93% came from other states and 15.20% came from Bangladesh. Thus almost three fourth of the population came from outside of the town. This figure indicates, the importance of Barasat. Added to this is the period of living of the local population 37.32% has been living

here for more than 30 years only and 18.72% for less than 10 years. This has yielded a pattern of homogeneous nature of population. Homogeneous in the sense that these people exert themselves for bettering their lots and show a keenness for the solution of civic problem.

The tertiary sector predominates in this town. For such a moffussil town this is not healthy. Primary and secondary sectors should have a recognised place for the balanced economy.

Land may be used in several purposes for mankind. The primary uses of land are related to forest and forestry, production of crops, use as pasture etc. On the other hand it may be used for industrial, commercial, institution, recreational purposes etc. In Barasat town, classification of the land has been made into several categories. Nearly 60% of the total land is used for residential purposes. Then 16.42% of land is devoted to agriculture. The picture of this use of land was quite different before partition. After the partition, numerous colonies sprung up-either through government patronisation or by private initiative. Colonies were raised on low lands or agricultural lands. This is the reason for the depletion of costly agricultural land.

The newcomers fell upon what they found. Basket-making, rickshaw-pulling, market-vending, construction-site working etc. Thus they became self employed and newer avenues of work were created by them. But they gave rise to problems. They demanded civic facilities like electricity, good roads, drinking water, schools etc. Some of the colonies were legalised by the government and hence financial help could be given, physical facilities were improved, but for non-legalised colonies these could not be done. These colonies became eye-sore for the viewing public. Thus slums

appeared – these slums are the by products of urbanisation. They accommodate the lowest rung of the town-people, or the uprooted rural people. The town planners have given their attention on these slums and changes are suggested from time to time. The C.M.D.A. suggested some measures. The study area has adopted these suggestions.

Agricultural land of the study area dwindles in volume due to encroachment for other purposes. Congestion is another important factor for conversion of lands from green fields or water bodies to residential plots. For this eco-balance is disturbed.

In 1995 Barasat municipality extended her area from 20.25 km<sup>2</sup> to 34.50 km<sup>2</sup>. Changes of land use are predominant in commercial, agricultural, industrial public and semipublic, utility service categories. Due to unscientific conversion of land C.M.D.A. has already prepared a land use zonal map. i) Development control zone 'c', a mixed area of commercial and residential purposes. ii) Development control zone 'c<sub>1</sub>' - an area primarily for industrial purposes and in future is likely to be used for other commercial uses iii) Control zone 'Ag' primarily meant for agriculture with residential and other uses in certain pockets. iv) Development control zone 'R' is predominantly for residential purposes. This control plan is made to check uncontrolled, erratic and unplanned growth and the coming of pollutant industries that plague the city life as is evident in Calcutta and in other urban centres of West Bengal.

Without help of private initiatives medical facilities of the town is not satisfactory. While the population of Barasat town is 1,77,147 in 1998, health facilities of the town are insufficient with the increasing population. There is only one general hospital composed of 306 beds, 45 doctors, 91 nursing

staffs. Indian medical association Barasat chapter spread out its activities and devoted service to the people of the Barasat town.

Supply of fresh drinking water is the important criterion for the development of the modern society. For the last three decades Barasat is experiencing the increasing pressure of urbanisation. This pressure is dependent generally on the locational importance. Two important high ways and two link roads radiate through the town. At the same time Barasat is a buffer zone between the rural area like Bangaon, Basirhat, Hasnabad and Calcutta core area. Retail and whole sale market of raw vegetables and fishes are major sources of economy of the area. In this regard transportation plays a dominant role for the growth of the town. There are two telephone exchanges in the town. More than 9000 subscribers have been benefited from these exchanges.

According to municipal data picture of supply water is changed during last 13 years. Pipe line is setup from 44.5 kms to 103 kms. At that time 3950 house connections are distributed. It is expected that Palta service water can supply drinking water in future.

The town has three reservoirs. Some hand pumps and deep tubewells also serve the needs of the people. The problems of sanitation is answered by the municipal authority through various short and long term measures. Methods of disposal of night soil is modern and scientific. Pucca (mettaled) drains run into 14.40 kms in 1999 from 7.50 kms in 1971. Of course kuchha (non-mettalled) drains could not be done away with. Efforts are on to improve this. The town has one burial ground and two burning ghats.

The picture of civic entertainments is as usual for many other towns. The town can boast of cinema halls and community halls for public entertainments. It has 12 play grounds and 37 parks. But in future, unless planned, the town may suffer from lack of open spaces.

Review of the existing urban amenities is very much essential to make an outline of the development projects in different aspects of the town. Density of population increases at a faster rate than civic amenities. So problems of urban life became aggravated. Barasat is one of the first municipalities in West Bengal. It developed from a tiny hamlet to a district town. Population was only 8634 in 1901 but in 1998 population rises to 1,77,147. At the time of establishment the number of wards were only 5 but now it is 30. Area of the town was 20.25 km<sup>2</sup> but after 1995 added 14.25 km<sup>2</sup> area is included with the town. Numerous primary and secondary schools have been set up during last three decades so far but rural urban migration and huge influx of population from neighbouring Bangladesh create problem of congestions of students of the schools. Barasat is the pioneer of women education in West Bengal, but no girls college has yet been set up. Absence of vocational training schools of the town to prepare youths for low level of skilled jobs is a serious drawback. Much dependance on underground water disturbed the water table. Maximum number of shallow tubewells dry up during warm season. Arsenic content above tolerable limit has been reported in Kazipara locality

The city depends more upon tertiary jobs. One modern dairy is set up in the outskirt of the locality. Some brick fields can employ a few hundreds of people. Some saw mills are here to meet the needs of the local consumption. Fruit processing, poultry, animal husabndry and small agriculture development etc. are the need of the town.

There are various problems in Barasat town. C.M.D.A. has already taken several steps for improving traffic as well as civic problems like drinking water, sewage, sanitation etc. In 1985-86 CMPO later CMDA, prepared Annual Block Development plan (ABDP) to assess total resources and formulate plans for future. Under this plan grass root level resources were involved. In the field of agriculture the aim was to increase the production at the rate of 10% annually with the help of distribution of minikits, fertilizer and pesticides to the small and marginal peasants. The know how of making compost manures, the digging of small shallow tubewells, the providing of good drainage system, were emphasised upon. Agriculture and agriculture related activities to absorb a good number of working hands was a novel and promising feature for self employment as the study area and the neighbouring regions have no possibility of any big industry to be setup. Dairy is a possibility- a big dairy (Metro) in collaboration with state milk federation and keventers' ltd. is established at Nilgunge and it now processes 1 lac litre of milk per day. Through RLEGP (Rural land employment generating plan) employment generating schemes were prepared.

In accordance with CMDA suggestion the direct link with village production centres are made by either constructing new roads or improving the existing non-metalled roads. For health programmes the primary health centres were improved. Out door dispensaries were opened. Newer beds were added in the hospital.

For sanitation, measures were adopted in the model of CMPO (Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation). System of sanitary latrines was made mandatory for each household for which either 100% grants or subsidy was provided. The problem of drinking water was approached with either

digging shallow tubewells or deep tubewells. The town has no system of water supply like Talla at Calcutta or Palta water works at Palta. For drainage system and the Nowi khal is to be excavated.

Under Calcutta urban development project -III (C.U.D.P) a new road, Serampore, Barrackpore, Barasat express way joining both sides of the Ganges (Hugli and Uttar 24 parganas districts) is proposed. For this a river bridge is proposed to be built at Serampore of Hugli district. Other roads connecting Dum Dum, Belgharia etc. are on the anvil. A railway goods terminal, and a truck terminal are proposed at Madhyamgram.

Barasat is one of the most important towns in the region. So a large number of the people and the economy of the region depend on it. The population of the town is growing sharply without considering the present infrastructure. So an all-round development plan is urgently required not only for the development of the area but also for the development of the town. Thus, the economy and the living condition of the people will rise with the development of the town in future.