

P R E F A C E

AREA:

Keeping the snowcapped peaks of the Himalayas with her turbulent rivers on the north, and the flat agrarian plains on the south with a strip of deep forest at the foothills covering the entire duars and terai, North Bengal with her 21,116 Sq.Km. area is an administrative division of the State of West Bengal, India. The five districts of North Bengal viz. Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, West Dinajpur and Malda have altogether twenty eight urban centres according to the census of India, 1971.

Methodology :

The object of the research work embodied in this thesis is to study the "Urban Development in North Bengal - its process, character and future trends." To bringout the salient urban character of those twentyeight urban centres, the author has visited each urban centre personally during his fieldwork which took two and half years from May 1973 to October 1975.

The extreme dearth of data and source materials have compelled the author to visit the urban centres personally and to collect information directly from those institutions which are

related with the urban functions of a town. The present work consists of the following:-

1. Field work.
2. Data Collection.
3. Source materials.

(1) Field-work: For the landuse maps of the major towns of North Bengal and for collection of data the author has done some field work for over two years (1973-1975).

Landuse Maps: As the Mouza sheet maps of Settlement Department of West Bengal which showed the divisions of all plots of a town neatly, were not available for all towns because of its restriction in selling due to Government's political reason or policy, the author has to depend on the municipal maps of 16 inch to 1 mile and 32 inch to 1 mile scale for the towns like Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, English Bazar, Salurghat, Silliguri and Dinhata. And in case of Jalpaiguri the author has prepared the landuse map based on the Mouza sheet maps which has been purchased from the Deputy Commissioner's office of Jalpaiguri.

The mouza sheet maps were seventeen in total, and the maps were of various scale from 16 inch to 1 mile to 64 inch to 1 mile and the author has to convert all those maps in a uniform scale.

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of 16 inch to 1 mile by pantograph and then prepared the landuse map. The author has made the landuse map personally walking through the each and every streets and lanes of each town, noting the utilisation of lands and marking the use with the help of the index or legends, prepared by him with the consultation of his guide.

Data Collection:

Due to the dearth of readymade data the author visited personally many a good number of organisations during the field work to bringout the central functional activities and the actual industrial pictures of the urban centres of North Bengal.

In case of central functional activities, the author visited the Government offices like Hospitals, Post and Telegraph Department, State Electricity Board's office; Banks and Insurances like State Bank of India, Central Bank of India, etc., General Insurances; Educational institutions, Recreational and Cultural organisations like Cinema houses, Libraries, etc.; Bata shops, Co-operatives and the Hotels, etc., for various informations and has followed a questionnaire (see Appendix-1) and has compiled those informations to bringout the desired result.

To findout the relationship between the administrative hierarchy and the functional hierarchy of the towns of North

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Bengal, the author has followed two simple mathematical methods of (i) arithmetic mean and (ii) Weight-mean.

The author has followed a questionnaire (see Appendix-2) to bringout the actual picture of the industrial units located in the urban centres of North Bengal.

To bringout the salient features of the Local Urban Governments as well as the urban amenities available in the towns of North Bengal, the author has personally visited all the Local Self Governments like Municipalities, Town Committees and the Anchal Panchayats of the towns of North Bengal.

For collection of data on the advance made by the different banks, the author personally visited each and every branch of the nationalised Commercial Banks, located in North Bengal and has compiled those data to present a comprehensive picture of the role of the financial institutions in the development of urbanisation.

Source Material:

Finally the author has consulted a good number of reports and gazetteers and the maps of P.W.D. (Roads) as the source of materials and for this he has visited the district libraries and Government Record Rooms of the individual district head quarters.

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Besides, as this work is really a human responsive, so the author met personally many persons of repute for their kind information and personal knowledge to explore the concealed past of those urban centres.