

CHAPTER-2

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SET-UP

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

1. Darjeeling district occupies second lowest i.e. 17th position in terms of population in the state.

2. The district can be fairly taken as one of the most urbanized districts as it is having 32 per cent of the total population in urban areas whereas the state is having more than 27 per cent of its total population in urban areas.

3. Darjeeling district ranks 3rd in growth rate (23.8 per cent).

4. Darjeeling has the third lowest density of population per sq.km. in the state (511).

5. The sex ratio of the district (937) is marginally above the state's sex ratio (934).

6. Literacy rate of the district is 71.8 per cent (above the state percentage which is 68.6) thereby making its rank 6th in the state.

7. There are 68 uninhabited villages in the district out of 708 villages.

8. There are in all 5 villages having population of 10,000 and above.

9. Mongpu Cinchona Plantation (Rangli Rangliot CD Block) is the most populated (12,742) and Tarabarir Chhat (Naxalbari CD Block) is the least populated village (2 persons) of the district.

10. The economy of the district is based on Tea Plantation and Tourism. Only 20.9 per cent of the Main Workers of the district are engaged in Agricultural sector.

11. Proportion of female main workers engaged as Cultivators and Household Industry Workers is greater than that of their male counterparts and in two other sectors (Agricultural Labourers and Other Workers) it is almost equal to that of their male counterparts.

12. Phansidewa CD Block has the highest number of villages (113) and Mirik the lowest (21 Part).

13. The Health Index of the district is 0.73;

14. The Income Index is 0.49;

15. The Human Development Index is 0.65. Thus its HDI rank is 4. Singalila Forest of Darjeeling Pulbazar CD Block has the largest area (17,777.9 hectares) and Suntalay Khasmahal under Kalimpong-I CD Block and Pachim Pasunath Barua under Matigara CD Block are two blocks with the smallest area (1.2 hectares each).

SIZE AND LOCATION

The district Darjeeling lies between 26°27' 10" and 27°13'05" north latitudes and 87°05'30" and 88°05'00" east longitudes. The district is bounded by Sikkim on the north, by Bangladesh and Uttar Dinajpur district and Bihar on the south, by Nepal on the west and by Bhutan and Jalpaiguri on the east. The total area of the district is 3,149 sq. kms. Its rank in respect of the area in the state is 12th. Its north to south extension is of 87 kms. that of east to west is of 90 kms.

The district is divided into two regions, hilly and the plain area - a portion of the outlying hill of the lower Himalayas and Terai - a stretch of territory lying along their base. All such areas are more or less covered by deep forests. The northern part of the district is fully mountainous facing Singalila Mountain and the southern part is almost plain in nature with green valleys. The hills rise abruptly from the plain and the elevation increases northwestward with great heights in the uppermost part. The northern portions consist of hard gneissic rocks capable of resisting denudation to a considerable extent, while the southern portion comprises of comparatively soft, thin, slaty and half-schistose rocks which are less resistant to erosion.

Topographically the district is divided into the following five sub-micro regions.

1. Darjeeling Himalayas:

The region is hilly and extends in the northern part of the district. The hill ranges in north-west to south-east alignment and its elevation varies from 400 to 3,000 meters. Along the northern boundary of the region the great Rangit flows in a very deep valley towards the east and falls in the Tista.

2. Kurseong Range:

The region extends between the highlands on the north and the plains of the Terai on the south. The Mechi river on the West and the Tista river on the east form the limits of regional boundary. This region slopes from north to south and its altitude ranges from 300 to 1,800 meters approximately above the sea level.

3. Kalimpong Range:

The region lies on the south - east of Darjeeling Himalayas and extends from the Tista river on the west to the Jaldhaka river on the east. The region is characterized by the presence of rising hills, numerous rivers and small torrents.

4. Western Duars:

The region seems to be flat and is sloping from north to south as evident by the flow of the rivers. The Mechi river flows along the regional boundary on the west and the Balasan river traverses along the north-eastern parts of the region. The general elevation rises from 80 to 300 meters. There is a lower range called lohargur/Loharger or iron hill which is covered by a dense Terai forest.

5. Mahananda Tract:

The region extends in the extreme south-east corner of the Darjeeling district having the smallest area of 195.40 km². The region is a continuation of the western Duars towards the south and some local heights between 100 and 150 meters can be seen in this area. The Mahananda is the only main river flowing along the boundary line of this region. Elevation of the district from mean sea level is 3,596 meters.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Himalayan jungles have always been home to the most exotic species of flora and fauna. The short spring season sees the mountain bathed in all conceivable hues. The fiery Rhododendrons splash the mountainside in the most beautiful reds, whites and the pale magnolia forests providing a striking contrast. The valley comes alive with a profusion of daisies, daffodils, chrysanthemums and tuberous begonia. Even the rarest Orchids grow in abundance in the wild. Amidst this dazzling flora a fauna is equally exotic. The Red Panda is found in the dense jungles between Gairibas and Molley on the way to Sandakpu. The Barking deer, Wild Bear and Himalayan bear are the other animals that are found here. Darjeeling is also the abode of a variety of birds and butterflies.

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

a) Forest Area:

Out of 1,188 thousand hectares of the state forest area the district has 1.2 thousand hectares under forest. The forest region is mainly located in the terai area of the district having trees like Sal, Segun etc. Out of 1.2 thousand hectares 1.02 thousands hectares are under Khas forest. During 1997-98 rupees ten lakhs twelve thousand were collected from forest produce registering 47.2 per cent increase over the previous year.

b) Mineral product:

The mining and mineral products are conspicuous by its absence in the district. The mineral products required by the district are imported from other places outside the district.

c) Soil & Cropping Pattern:

In the hilly region of the district the soil is suitable for plantation but not very much suitable for growing paddy. Apart from plantation, maize as crop is produced in the hilly region. Paddy is mainly grown in the plain region under Siliguri Sub-Division. Out of

the total area of 325 thousand hectares. 145 thousand hectares (46 per cent) were under net cropped area during 1997-98. During the same year out of the total area, 74.3 thousand hectares were under cereal crops. Rice and maize were produced in 35.5 thousand hectares and 22.6 thousand hectares respectively. Apart from maize and paddy, wheat, jute and potato were also produced in the district. During the same year 20.53 thousand hectares of land was under irrigation. Out of this total irrigated area 7.52 thousand hectares of land area was irrigated by Government Canal.

d) Land and land-use pattern :

According to D.L.R, West Bengal, total land area, utilizable for cultivations, is 325.5 thousand hectares of land out of which the net cropped area is 136.8 thousand hectares of land, 124.6 thousand hectares of land is under forest as per state Forest Department and 8.8 thousand hectares of land is under current fallow. (*Source: District Statistical Hand Book, 2001, Govt. of WB*)

e) Tenancy:

The State Government is the owner of all estate land since the enactment of West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1948. But in case of

agricultural land, the tenancy is contractual with the owner. After the land reform measures taken up by the State Government there is no intermediary system of tenancy in the district. In terms of operational land holding, more than 70.5 per cent falls under the marginal (below 1.0 acre) size of holding in the district. Till 2000, 12,388.65 hectares of vested agricultural land have been distributed among more than 50 thousand beneficiaries. Out of the total beneficiaries, 65 per cent beneficiaries belong to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities taken together. (*Source: District Statistical Hand Book, 2001, Govt. of WB*)

f) Agriculture:

The district is under extremely diverse agricultural conditions owing to its physical Configuration. The mountainous region to the north forms its greater part and the alluvial plain to the south is Terai while the Terai contains soils suited for rice cultivation, there are also poor sandy tracts unsuitable for plough. The land is of good fertility on the gentler slopes and in the upper valleys, but no crops are grown above 9,500 feet above sea level owing to the cold. Except potatoes, the upper limits for rice, maize and millet are much lower; Tea does not grow above 7,000 feet. The crops of the district broadly fall into

two groups the plantation crops like tea and cinchona and nonplantation crops like, rice, maize, wheat, barley and sugarcane. Rice is grown extensively in the plains, while maize, ginger, potatoes and cardamoms are grown in the hills of the district. Subsidiary crops like cotton, jute, pulses, oilseed, and sugarcane are grown in the plains. The area under paddy in 2000-01 is 34.2 thousand hectares of land.

(Source: District Statistical Hand Book, 2001, Govt. of WB)

g) Irrigation:

In the district irrigation from private canal is nil. The source is mainly from government canals, tanks, wells and other sources. Out of total area under crop around 9 thousand hectares of land is under irrigation as per 2001 report. In the district various sources of irrigation are available. But the year of the report on all available sources is 1997 as per which there are 4 Deep Tube wells (including Main Tube wells) and 236 River Lift Irrigation for watering the field under crop. The number of Shallow Tube wells as per 2001 is 182. *(Source: District Statistical Handbook, 2001, Govt. of WB.)*

h) Animal Husbandry:

There were 233,301 cattle, 10,406 buffaloes, 6,406 sheep, 265,350 goats, 8,058 horses and ponies, 56,756 pigs, 58,037 other animals and 642,298 poultry birds in the district (*District Statistical Hand Book, 1998*).

i) Fishery:

Over 125 species of fish were recorded in the Darjeeling District Gazetteer of 1947. The fish fauna of Darjeeling is of special interest as the area is a meeting place of the Chinese, Malayan and Indian elements of the fishes of the oriental region. All the hill sections of the large streams and especially the Tista river abound in Mahseer, Katli, Indian Trout and Goonch. Apart from these, there are some cat fishes other major and minor carps and some ornamental fishes. Out of 144.5 hectares of water area which is the net area available for pisciculture in the district, the net area under effective pisciculture is 104.5 hectares. The number of government schemes on fisheries operated in the district is 64 and approximate annual production is 3,356 quintal as per District Statistical Hand Book, 2001, Govt. of WB.

j) Electricity & Power:

In the year 2000-2001 193,251 units (1,000 KWH.) of electricity were consumed. In the district there are 9 towns and 708 villages with 391 villages having been electrified. Out of them, 381 villages are having electricity for domestic purpose, 60 villages for agricultural purpose and 141 villages for other purposes and 35 villages are using electricity for all purpose.

k) Industry :

Tea manufacturing is the main industry in the district. In most cases plantation and processing for manufacturing is done in the same area. Most of the garden and industrial units are situated at the sloping of the hill. Apart from hilly area some industries manufacturing flour and plywood have been established. Regarding cottage and small-scale industries, there were 14,434 small industrial establishment registered with the Directorate of Cottage and Small Scale Industries, employing 86,412 workers in the district.

l) Trade and Commerce:

The main items of export of the district are tea and timber. Darjeeling tea is exported not only to other district or state but also to other countries. Other than industrial product, orange of Darjeeling is of high quality which is also exported from the district. The economy of the district is also dependent particularly on tourism. The main tourist spots located in the hilly region are Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong and Mirik. Tourism industry of the district is very much strong. As a tourist resort, Darjeeling is known not only to the people of the country but also to the people of abroad.

m) Transport:

There are 486.25 kms. of road maintained by PWD (Road) in Darjeeling district of which 168.25 kms. are under National Highways. Apart from this, 427 kms. of road (surfaced & unsurfaced) were maintained by the Municipalities of the district in 1997-98. In the hilly sub-divisions mainly light vehicles ply. There is a narrow gauge railway track connecting Darjeeling Himalayan Railways is the authority for running railway. The train called Toy Train has been running from Siliguri to Darjeeling for 150 years. In the year 1997 about 7,153 goods vehicles, 15,383 motorcars & jeeps, 3,640 taxis and

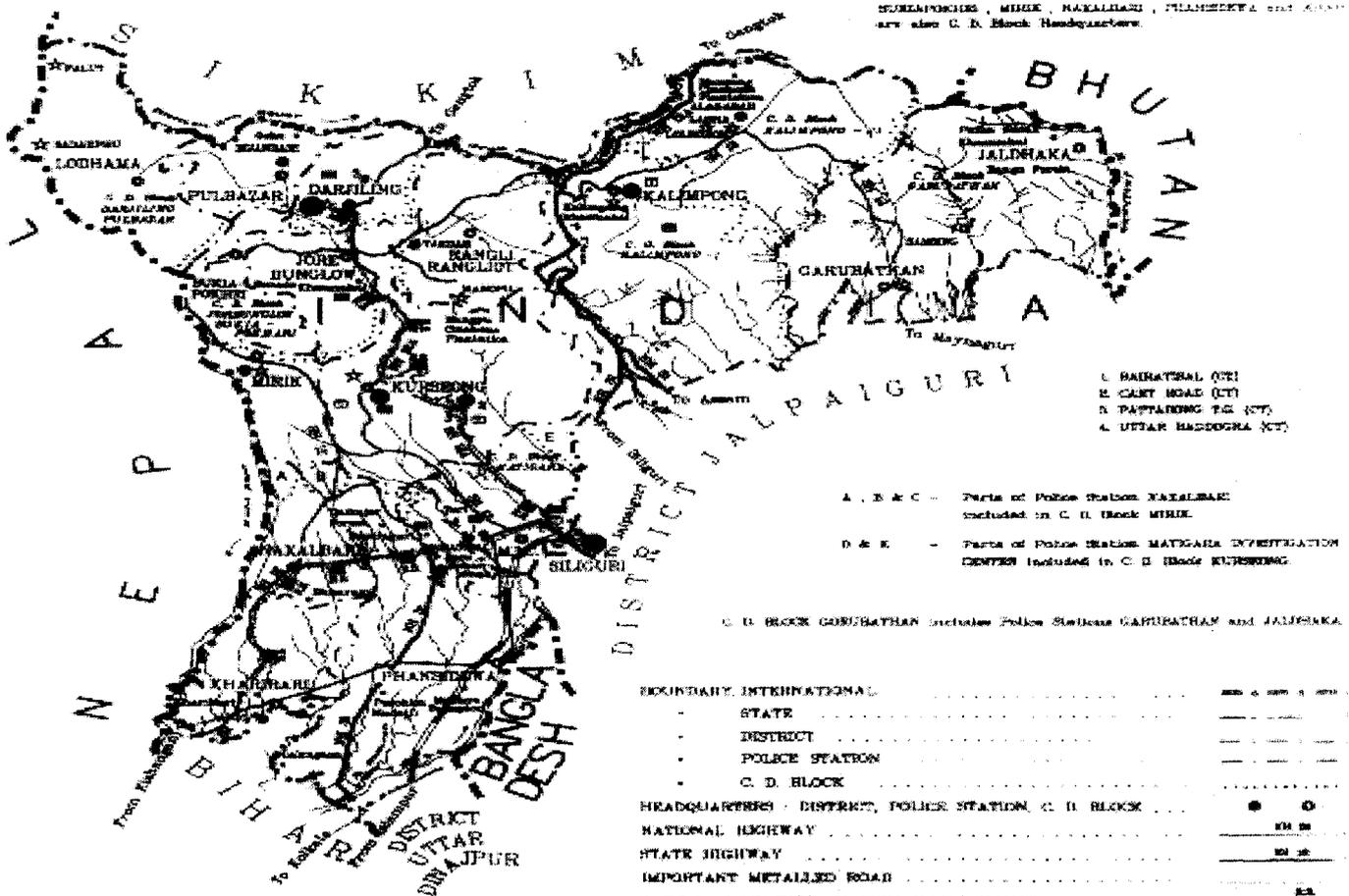
contract carriages, 329 mini buses and 930 stage carriages were plying in the district (Source : District Statistical Hand Book,2001, Govt. of WB)

DISTRICT DARJILING

Scale 0 5 10 15 20 25 Kms



Police Station Headquarters of KALIMPONG, GARUBATHAN, JALPHAKA, MIRIK, NAKALBAK, KURSHONG and MATIGARA are also C. D. Block Headquarters.



- 1. BAIKATAL (CT)
- 2. EAST ROAD (CT)
- 3. PATTANONG P.S. (CT)
- 4. UTTAR MADDOGRA (CT)

- A, B & C - Parts of Police Station NAKALBAK included in C. D. Block MIRIK.
- D & E - Parts of Police Station MATIGARA INVESTIGATION CENTER included in C. D. Block KURSHONG.

C. D. BLOCK GARUBATHAN includes Police Stations GARUBATHAN and JALPHAKA.

BOUNDARY INTERNATIONAL	---
STATE	---
DISTRICT	---
POLICE STATION	---
C. D. BLOCK	---
HEADQUARTERS - DISTRICT, POLICE STATION, C. D. BLOCK	● ○
NATIONAL HIGHWAY	==
STATE HIGHWAY	---
IMPORTANT METALLED ROAD	---
RAILWAY LINE WITH STATION, BROAD GAUGE	==
RAILWAY LINE WITH STATION, METRE GAUGE	---
RAILWAY LINE WITH STATION, NARROW GAUGE	---
RIVER AND STREAM	~
VILLAGE HAVING 1000 AND ABOVE POPULATION WITH NAME	○
TOWNS WITH POPULATION 5000 AND ABOVE AND CLASS I, II, III, IV, V, & VI	●
DEGREE COLLEGE AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTION	○
IMPORTANT TOURIST LODGE / OTHER GOVT. REST HOUSE	☆

TOTAL AREA OF THE DISTRICT	3448.00 Sq. Kms
TOTAL POPULATION OF THE DISTRICT	350917
TOTAL NUMBER OF NON - STATUTORY TOWNS	4
TOTAL NUMBER OF STATUTORY TOWNS	4 + 1 (Part)
TOTAL NUMBER OF VILLAGES	708
DISTANCE FROM STATE CAPITAL TO DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS	660 Kms

T. G. TEA GARDEN
M.I.C. MATIGARA INVESTIGATION CENTRE