

APPENDIX I

SELECT INFORMATION ON JALPAIGURI DISTRICT

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A.1.1 Introduction

The district of Jalpaiguri extends over an area of 6234 square kilometres in the shape of an irregular rectangle lying lengthwise East and West. 24.4 per cent of this area i.e. 371642 acres is under Forests at various stages of the commercial exploitation. 19.5 per cent i.e. an area of 296769 acres is under Tea Gardens, 36.9 per cent or about 564192 acres is under cultivation and rest 19.2 per cent includes river beds, roads, towns and others.

Of the total population of 1750159 (1971 census) 31.12 per cent i.e. 544686 number are workers of whom 50.01 per cent are cultivators and agricultural labourers, 49.99 per cent are engaged in plantations and other allied occupations. The density of population is not high which is 280 per square kilometre.

It may appear that tea is an important industry which contributes substantially to betterment of economic life

*The Appendix I is based on data and information supplied by the Office of the District Agriculture Officer, Jalpaiguri.

of this district and that in Forest there is a vast exploitable resources which can be expected to contribute towards the general development of the district.

Unfortunately, these two sizeable income and employment generating sectors remain almost as enclaves and do not have either inter-dependence or complementarity with the agricultural and agro-industrial sector which is the primary field of economic activity of the major part of the population. It can therefore, be possibly stated that economic life in the district depends on agriculture which is its primary and almost sole source of activity.

A.1.2 Location and Boundaries

The district of Jalpaiguri lies between Latitudes $26^{\circ}16'$ to $27^{\circ}0'$ in the Northern Hemisphere.

The district is bounded in the North by Bhutan and the district of Darjeeling, on the South by Bangladesh and the district of Cooch-Bihar, on the West by the district of Darjeeling and Bangladesh and on the East by the Eastern Duars of Assam.

A.1.3 Climate and Rainfall

The district is placed on a distinct ecological setting and is different in its climate and rainfall from those obtained in the plains of West Bengal. Maximum humidity during rainy season (May to October) is about 100 per cent ranging with a minimum between 75-80 per cent with the advent of winter, the humidity in early winter month of November varies between 80-60 per cent. With rise in temperature during months of March and April, average maximum and minimum move between 70-80 per cent. Therefore, at no time of the year atmospheric humidity goes below 50 per cent.

As regards temperature, April to August are the hotter months. The mean maximum temperature occurs in August is 88.1 F and the mean maximum temperature is lowest in January i.e. 51.7 F. Temperature is rarely excessive. From March the mean temperature starts rising and after that it gradually increases till it reaches highest in August. Dews are also common during the nights of Summer months.

Average rainfall of the district is 3160 mm which is mainly (90 per cent) received between the month of April and September only and remaining 10 per cent being received during October to March. Pre monsoon showers received between February and April, gradually go on increasing from March till regular monsoon. In contrast, total of average

of rainfall in pre-rabi period, namely, October and November is less and this is followed by dry months in December and January, when rains are not received. Therefore, over the district, rains in varying intensities are received almost in every month except in December and January.

However, in this district high humid conditions throughout the year, milder Summer, heavy precipitations and spreading of rains over different months of the year, provide a distinct ecological environment wherein inter-relationship of soil, water and plant is highly unbalanced bringing instabilities to agricultural production.

A.1.4 Rivers and Streams

The principal rivers in the Jalpaiguri district proceeding from West to East are (1) the Mahananda which forms the Western boundary, (2) the Teesta, in the permanently settled area of the district, (3) the Jaldhaka, (4) the Torsha, (5) the Kaljani, (6) the Raidak, and (7) the Sonkos which forms the Eastern boundary. These are normally all navigable by boats during July and September.

The Mahananda from Siliguri alters its course slightly towards the West and enters the Jalpaiguri district. From this point, it forms a boundary between Jalpaiguri and

Darjeeling and then between Bangladesh and Jalpaiguri. The Teesta enters Jalpaiguri at its North Western corner and flows in a South-Eastern direction until it passes into Rangpur district of Bangladesh.

Between the Mahananda and the Teesta there are such small rivers as the Saun, the Kartoa, the Chaol, the Talma, the Jamuna, the Panga, the Karala running through Jalpaiguri town, the Chukchuka and the Rukruka and the Gadadhar between the Teesta and the Jaldhaka, the Dharala river is a medium sized stream. Principal tributaries are the Murtee and the Jiti. Between the Jaldhaka and the Torsha are several small streams which, from West to East, are called the Galandi, the Duduya, the Damdima, the Tasati, the Mujnai and the Buritorsa.

A.1.5 S o i l

The group of soil which mainly grow Paddy, Jute and Tea are the Tarai soils. They are derived from mountainous region of the Himalayas.

The soils are brought down by Hilly rivers like the Teesta, the Mahananda, the Torsha and the Jaldhaka and their tributaries which bring materials from a height of about 10,000' and have deposited layer by layer to form the soil of this district.

The greater part of this district is covered with alluvial ranging from pure sand to clay but it is mainly sandyloam. But in basin between the Jaldhaka and the Teesta, it is hard black and clays. In the upland to the North of the Duars, the soil is ferrogenous clay and is particularly well suited to the growth of the Tea plants. The Western-Duars contains numerous old river beds which have been deserted by the stream which used to flow along them, near the hills, strewn with stones and boulders lower down and contain gravel and in the plains they contain sand. Presence of these elements bring problem in cultivation.

The low land called "Dahala" contains clay with admixture of sand. The high land known as "Danga" mostly consists of sand. The medium-land known as "Sahari" lies in between the above two classes.

Torrential rains falling during the season, lead to high surface, inward as well as lateral run-off and deplete soil of its natural minerals and salts and lead to acidity and deficiency of major and minor plant nutrients.

Continuous rains also interfere with biological decomposition of organic matters and hamper natural processes in building up soil fertility and improving soil structure.

Further, these soils are dominantly sandyloam

with variations to loam and have a low water holding capacity. They are deficient in organic matter and are characterised by low fertility, as are evidenced from their low nitrogen and potash contents. Available phosphate is also medium in some pockets.

A.1.6 Geology

With the exception of Northernhilly fringe, the whole of the district is covered by alluvial deposits. The alluvial consists of coarse gravel near the hill and sandy clay and sandy loam in South. A patch of black clay occurs in the area between the Teesta and the Jaldhaka.

The Buxa - Jaintihills area composed of a series of rocks known as Buxa series which consist of variegated slates, quartzites and dolomites.

A.1.7 Land Utilisation

1.	Total Geographical Area	:	15,25,056	Acres
2.	Area under Forest	:	3,71,642	"
3.	Area under Tea	:	2,96,769	"
4.	Area available for Cultivation	:	5,64,192	"
5.	Irrigated Area (Net)	:	61,440	"