

CHAPTER – V

URBANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN COLONIAL DARJEELING

The historical trajectories of colonially cherished and built hill stations in India would have us believe that the formations of urban spaces in the plains and of the hills were altogether of two different processes. For the making of the hill stations, the considerations like racial distinctions and climatic value received priorities. Principally, colonial urban sites situated at mountain ridges away from the tropical plains, the hill stations were built to facilitate the recuperation of European bodies from the heat and diseases of the plains.¹ The growth of Darjeeling town as an important colonial Hill station had been a milestone to this direction. Researches on hill stations have well approved the fact that colonial hill stations in India evoked a nostalgic sense of loss at the contemporary violation of their idyllic beauty through the rise of population and gradual overcrowding as an inevitable urban phenomenon. Urban hill station Darjeeling like such other hill stations has been understood as a specific development of colonial social history. Primarily, it was viewed as an urban space of colonial leisure and recreation; temperate place that represented socially, culturally and architecturally, derivations of metropolitan and imperial symbols of leisure.²

While focusing on Darjeeling as a defined space of colonial urbanism, two features seem discernable. Firstly, there had been the spatial segregation between the native and European residential areas, although such European residential sanctity was intruded upon by affluent Indians in the late colonial period. Thus there had been continuous overlapping of urban spaces and were constantly negotiated.³ However, such negotiation of sharing distinct urban spaces sometimes created tensions and evolved out an urge for exclusively for the Europeans. As it has been observed, “In the absence of clearly

defined separation the colonizers created discrete containments for both public and private sociability”.⁴

Secondly, the urban space of Darjeeling was integral to the colonial political economy in which the resources of all sites were subject to the mode of colonial resource use leading ultimately capitalistic utilization of resources. Dane Kennedy’s exploration for the eventual ‘despoiling’ of the hill stations in the late colonial period is worthy to mention here. He argues that “colonial sustenance required legions of subordinates and attracted the aspiring Indian elite, whose presence subverted their pristine quality dislodging the private public distinction between the cities in the plains and the hill stations in British India”.⁵

The expansion and growth of Darjeeling subverted another spatial dichotomy; that between the idyllic hills and the disease-ridden plains in official discourse and public culture. This subversion was not only occasioned by the accommodation of Indians in menial and clerical capacities within the municipal limits of the exclusive hill station. Such subversion was intrinsically linked with Darjeeling as a colonial space, whose function being not only to serve as a site of medicalized leisure for the British and the Indian elites, but also to transform the surrounding newly colonized districts into commercial, revenue yielding settled economic sites. Once this was accomplished, the integration of its resource pull into the larger colonial economy sustained the expansion and consolidation of the town. Thereafter, the Indian elite sought exclusive urban spaces within the hills station, emulating the status and privilege available to the British in India resulting thereby a gradual process of the development of anglo-sanskritocracy.⁶

Bhattacharya further argues, “*Colonial administrators planned the hill stations in the 19th century to create an idyllic social space away from the tropical climate and the Indianized cities in the plains.*

Therefore, the hill stations represented topographical, climatic, social and architectural ideals that were radically different from the cities in the plains. But the process of colonizing what were after all remote tropical mountain villages and establishing and sustaining a urban centre which, by the turn of the century, hosted an entire colonial administration for half the year subverted these ideals, and rendered the urban spaces in Darjeeling politically and economically contestable.” Thus, at the one end, the tropical mountain location, air and water of Darjeeling deluded Europeans; they looked similar to the Alps; on the other, the urbanized, lively, lucrative Darjeeling hill station attracted investments, labour and visitors. In the process, the segregation and social exclusivity were both violated and contested by the British residents as well by affluent Indians.

The process of urbanization under British rule is intrinsically linked with the economic policy of the colonial rulers. Such process has been appropriately periodized by R.P. Dutt into three phases – the mercantilist (1757-1813) phase, free trade industrial capitalist (1813-1850) phase and financial imperialist (1850's onwards) phase.⁷ The historical process of urbanization in Darjeeling falls in between the last two periods of the colonial rule, wherein the colonial primary urbanization transformed 'little tradition' (as was existing in the name of indigenous population and culture) into great traditions (as claimed by the colonial power of their own) expanding thereby the normative zone for territorial integration by way of universalizing colonial cultural consciousness. More specifically, during colonial urbanization, there developed a hiatus of communication between the town and the country, living apart from each other. Urban influence did not filter much beyond its immediate environs into the areas of its administrative jurisdiction. Urbanization refers to the twin processes such as 'orthogenesis' and 'heterogenesis'. While pre-colonial India represents 'cities of the moral order, the colonial cities were the results of foreign intervention representing "cities of the technical order."⁸

Due to military installations, sanitariums, expansion of tea gardens, there had been in Darjeeling growing number of Europeans and rapidly growing migration, due to labour encouragement, and expansion of service sectors. The process leading to monetized economy facilitated the social and economic integration of the region. Tea profit, timber extraction were other ways of bringing money to the Himalayan Darjeeling. Darjeeling was shaped by the specific characteristics of late 19th century British colonialism. Darjeeling expanded at a time when the British were far more concerned about immediate extraction of natural resources as well as agricultural revenue and international trade; both of these were reflected in the growth of the town.

In the contemporary researches on urbanization and material transformations, the dialectic of space and time; the dual socio-economic processes have assumed a renewed significance.⁹ Researches have been conducted on the construction of the urban landscape by capitalism as amply corroborated by the writings of Harvey, David, (1985); *The Urbanization of Capital*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, USA; Lefebvre. H. (1991), *The Production of Space*, Blackwell, U.K.; Castells, M, (1989), *The Information City: Information Technology, Economic Restructuring and the Urban Regional Process*, Blackwell, U.K. that have helped to develop a thorough understanding of the urban system with distinct temporal, functional and spatial forms being integrally associated with the historical process of development of various modes of production .¹⁰ During colonial phase of Indian history, capital rebuilt space and reconstructed environment in its own image, giving rise to a distinctively urban space of Darjeeling and its resultant transformation. Central to the theme is the link between ideology and socio-spatial formations and the role of power in controlling such urban space. The colonial historiography suggests that ideology, around with power, went on to create patterns of domination and intensified class divisions and appropriated space. In the Marxist analysis, resistance is integral to such domination (read

restructuration) which may also get shaped in distinct forms while in Foucauldian framework, resistance (read counter domination) is near absent as there can be no such effort without power.¹¹

Unquestionably, both coloniality and colonial power had been largely represented in the urban landscape images of colonial Darjeeling. As Zukin argues, landscape not only denotes the usual geographical meaning of “physical surroundings” but also refers to an ensemble of material and social practices and their social representation. Ultimately, like other colonial urban settlement, colonial urban Darjeeling had become the landscape of the powerful and that of the powerless. Darjeeling town along with two other hill sub-divisions Kurseong and Kalimpong had been essentially the colonial creation which had undergone three conglomerated circumstantial events such as ‘Alien superimposition’, ‘the Anglo-Sanskritocracy’ and ‘Colonial notion of modernity’.¹²

The Encyclopedia of Social Sciences defines urbanization as ‘the movement of people from communities concerned chiefly or slowly with agriculture to other communities, generally larger whose activities are primarily centered in government, trade, manufacture, or allied interest’. Urbanization is a two way process. It involves not only movement from village to towns but also involves change from agricultural occupation to business, trade, service and behavior patterns. The United Nations, after taking note of the variations of the nature of urbanization from one country to the other, has attempted to provide certain principal comprehensive criteria of urbanization. Five main criteria have been attempted to provide in defining the term ‘urban’: (a) administrative functions; (b) population size; (c) local self-government; (d) certain urban characteristics like sewerage, public water supply, electricity, civic administration, police station, hospital, market, educational institutions, judicial institutions, metal roads, transport etc.; predominant non-agricultural avocations. Over two-

thirds of the people in the area should be engaged in industry, commerce, transportation etc.

An urban centre is basically an interaction between large scale political and social processes. It is characterized by the size of its population, its types and magnitude of economic activities, and its level of political authority and cultural influence. A network of flows of people, money, commodities, regulations and ideas links the settlement within an urban system. Several economic, social and political dimensions influence the structure of an urban settlement. For colonial Darjeeling, urbanization was not the expression of a process of modernization but the manifestation of the level of socio-spatial relations, of the accentuation of the social contradictions inherent in the mode of development determined by a specific dependence within the monopolistic capitalist system.¹³ Interestingly, the neo-Marxists, like Hebert Marouse [1964], Andre Gunder Frank [1969], Castells [1977], Harvey [1982] have viewed urbanization and corresponding urban settlement as instrument of capitalist domination, and they function as centres of power of the regional, national and international bourgeoisie'. The development and wealth of the urban centre depend on the effective exploitation of the material and human resources of their peripheries.¹⁴

Scholars like Ballahatchet and Harrison have drawn our attention to the need for historical studies of the development of urbanism in India. They emphasized the importance of the role of politics in determining the location, growth and even decline of Indian cities through history.¹⁵

Referring R.J. Johnston, Professor S.K. Munshi provided a three part model of urbanization in the Eastern Himalayas. The first model relates to upward quantitative demographic change, involving enhancement in the proportion of population living in urban areas in which migration is a stimulating factor behind urban growth. The

second model deals with the structural change in society resulting out of the development of capitalism in which towns grow as centres of production, distribution and exchange processes. The third model connects with the psycho-behavioural urbanization, bringing in changes in attitudes in behavioural patterns and in values giving rise to a form of urbanism distinctly different from what a rural society holds.¹⁶ In this three part model of urbanization, demographic changes are the dependent variable driven by material structural imperatives and specified context of time period and the place or location. This three-part model while applied in Darjeeling seems highly relevant with the qualifiers that the identification of Darjeeling as a prospective location for the establishment of military installations, sanatorium, leisure and health resort had been essentially the decision of the imperial powers to create a socio-political space what they imagined to be identical with the European notion of nature. However, with the creation of Darjeeling as a hill station and with its designation as the world's best quality tea production settlement, Darjeeling in the Eastern Himalayas got closely linked with the colonial urban processes since mid-thirties of the nineteenth century and had become the most urbanized settlement in the Eastern Himalayas.¹⁷ Throughout the colonial period, tea, tourism, transportation, health resorts, missionary led English educational institutions grew in pace resulting in a distinctively different urban cultural coloniality for Darjeeling.

The political economy approach to the third world urbanization focuses on the dependent nature of capitalist development in the third world which places more emphasis on external economic forces in the study of the town and changes that occurred in the structure of town as a result of the shift from pre-capitalist mode to capitalist mode of production, the resulting heterogeneous class structures of the town as well as the role of the state in shaping the process of urbanization by lending support to the power of the elites and the changing modern sector of the urban economy. A study of colonial urbanization and

urban development in Darjeeling based on political economy approach¹⁸ is indeed academically considered to be valid for the unique history, ecological positioning and its distinctive British colonial identity.

The colonial administrative officials of the East India Company, at its head quarters in Calcutta had the desire to have a hill station nearer to Calcutta and Darjeeling was their ultimate choice. The British East India Company Officials primarily noticed the possibilities for a sanatorium town at the site of a Lepcha village (Dorje-ling) in the eastern Himalayas. Under the Instruction of the Governor General, in 1828, Captain G.A. Lloyd, an army official, and J.W. Grant, the Commercial resident at Malda arrived at the Dorje-ling site with adequate hardship and separately reported back to the company Authority on the merit of the site as an ideal location for a sanatorium town.¹⁹ In 1829, the EIC Authority sent Capt. J.D. Herbert, Deputy Surveyor General to the site to explore possibilities for the establishment of a sanatorium for British troops.²⁰ On behalf of the East India Company, in 1835, Lloyd had leased the Darjeeling tract from the king of Sikkim for an annual payment of Rs.3000/-.²¹

For the first five years Capt. Lloyd, under the authority of EIC, had organized the labour for building the road to Darjeeling, however the EIC replaced him with Surgeon Major Archibald Campbell, formerly, Assistant Resident in Nepal²². Campbell was vested with wide-ranging fiscal, civil and judicial powers and oversaw its expansion.²³ Darjeeling town was established to provide a place of rejuvenation to British troops and civilians away from the heat and dust of the plains of Northern and Eastern parts of Gangetic plains.

Military or defense strategic functions formed a significant factor towards the development and growth of Darjeeling town. Darjeeling being located in a frontier zone, adjacent to Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, the EIC military officials had an anxiety of intrusion by the regional/local mountain rulers. The principal intention of the British to

provide assistance to Sikkim in 1817 was to reduce the possibility of Nepal-Bhutan intrigues against the East India Company. In 1838, Lloyd, then Officer on Special Duty, North East Frontier, informed the Company Government in Calcutta about a Nepali Mission to Bhutan. The EIC resolved that a local corps of sappers and miners would be formed for Darjeeling. The Asiatic Intelligence wrote in 1839: "We hear sad accounts of the state of affairs at Darjeeling, arising from the neglect of government to furnish the inhabitants with the security expected. The people have got into their heads that the Goorkhas are arming and collecting in great force in the neighbourhood of intended sanatorium a sort of panic in the result..."²⁴ Notwithstanding the fact that after 1835, no attempt was made by Goorkhas and so to speak no other ruler of the hills to intrude into the Darjeeling frontier, however, sense of anxiety did prevail.

By 1857, the prospect of Darjeeling as a centre for the recruitment of Gorkha soldiers attracted the attention of the Government. The initiative of E. Drummond, Officiating Magistrate, Dinajpur is not out of place to mention while in his letter dtd. 10th Sept., 1857, he suggested to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal that "the Sebundie Corps at Darjeeling should be raised to the strength of ten full companies with British Officers...". He further pointed out that "they would in every way be more efficient, courageous, and trustworthy body of men than any to be had in the plains."²⁵ The importance of Darjeeling rose significantly higher as the Head Quarters of the Eastern Zone for the recruitment of Gorkha Soldiers. The Annual Reports of the Dy. Commissioner, Darjeeling, stated that during 1891-92, 1000 hill people from Darjeeling were recruited²⁶ for different military purposes and were sent different frontier districts for military transport purposes, building works and direct military expedition. The importance of Darjeeling as a potentially vulnerable strategic location was highlighted by A. Eden, Secretary to the Government of Bengal in a

Communication No.1458T dtd. 11 July, 1864 sent to the Secretary, Military Department, Government of India:

“Darjeeling needs protection. It is in an exposed position Darjeeling has in fact come to be regarded by the inhabitants of the hills of Nepal, of Sikkim, of Bhutan, and of Tibet (Lhasa) not only as a centre of British wealth and civilization, but as a point of which the the British Government is most easily assailable unless protected by an adequate Military Force. There are now no Native Troops at Darjeeling. The sappers are no longer maintained as a Military Body or subject to articles of war The convalescent Depot ... is empty in the cold weather, and is not at any time (to) be relied on for other duty. And there can be no doubt that, while the cantonment at Senchal affords an admirable Sanitarium for European troops, the presence of the Detachment there gives a feeling of security to the whole of the scattered European inhabitants of the District, impresses the native population both of British Sikkim and of Foreign countries by which it is surrounded with a wholesome sense of the power of the government, and renders attack from any quarter hopeless and practically impossible”.²⁷

In 1865 there was a proposal to construct a cantonment and barracks for European troops in Darjeeling. The committee appointed to select the site for this purpose recommended ‘Bryanstone’ in order to combine the whole complex in one ring fence with the Convalescent Depot at Jalapahar. However, Cecil Beadon, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, argued in a Minute of 28 December 1865 that the civil station of Darjeeling formed only a small part of the British interest to be protected on the Sikkim hills. Numerous tea factories and other private settlements where Englishmen stayed with their families were scattered throughout the district. These were more vulnerable as far as hostile attacks were concerned than the hill station itself. The headquarters of the Darjeeling sappers was located in the hill station and the police reserve was nearby. The Convalescent Depot occupied a commanding

position in Jalapahar. Taking all these facts into account, the hill station of Darjeeling was the very last place to be attacked. Although there was no danger of attacks by the Lepchas, Sikkimese and Nepalis and Bhutan was too far for danger, Beadon suggested that any patrol in Darjeeling would have to be nearer the frontier than Jalapahar. Senchal was considered advantageous as a military position. There were road linkages, accesses to the defence of all points likely to be attacked and good communications with the plains. The land belonged to the government, the climate was healthy and there was abundant space for building, exercise and recreation. Beadon felt that :

“...as a military position, it is on the whole as good as any other, if not the very best, in the hills, that it affords equal protection to Darjeeling as it stands – to the extended sanatorium, which, in all probability will be established on the Tukdar spur, to Kurseong, to Hope Town, to the Cinchona Establishment in the valley of Rungbe and to the tea plantation throughout the province. The barracks of Sinchal command a view of the whole of British Sikkim as much as of Independent Sikkim, of nearly all the newly acquired hill territory of Bhutan and of the ridge which divides Darjeeling from Nepal; and there are conspicuous and well-known marks for many miles in every direction. Among barbarous and ignorant tribes the site of a British Cantonment ever present to their view and ever reminding them of the existence of a power which is irresistible cannot fail to produce – as it undoubtedly does produce – a great moral effect”.²⁸

The Commander-in-Chief recommended the proposal and the Governor General-in-Council considered the matter and directed the adoption of necessary measures for early and permanent construction of accommodation at Senchal for a wing of British Infantry and a Battery of Garrison Artillery. It was suggested that the Senchal barracks should be arranged so as to be defensible in the event of a crisis so that a portion of the troops could move out for offensive operation.²⁹

Newall wrote in 1873 that this Report of 1872 had pointed merely to a defence of the Town and Station of Darjeeling but as much valuable property was included within the district, he had thought it expedient to acquire a knowledge of the frontiers where it was possible that an enemy might be met with advantage, so as, if possible, to keep the enemy at arm's length and out of the district. There was a belt of dense bamboo forest clothing the crest of the hills bounding the western or Nepal frontier which formed an effectual barrier to any possible invasion from the quarter but there was one weak point: behind the ridge forming the British Indian boundary called Tongloo existed the Fort of Elam in Nepal about eight miles from the frontier, dominating a fertile valley, where the Nepal government possessed a considerable garrison, with granaries, store-houses and several field guns. The fortress was about eight hours or less from the British Indian frontier pillar or post no.17, which was situated at the point where the British Indian boundary line of road turns north along the Nepal frontier and was about equidistant from the British position at Jalapahar by an easy, level road. Three roads converged on Pillar 17 from the Fort of Elam and the Nepal Government could send troops along these roads and in the course of one long night throw a force of 5,000 or 6,000 men, with a couple of mountain batteries, right across British communications with the plains, thereby occupying the ridge from "Lepchajuggut" to "Senchal", the key of Darjeeling, by an army twenty or thirty times the strength of the garrison. He recommended that a block-house which could hold 50 to 100 'native' police in an emergency should be constructed there. Post no.17 could be held by police or volunteers placed in telegraphic communication with the main position of Jalapahar and would form a valuable outpost on the line of least resistance into Indian territory.³⁰

Newall (1887) discussed the strategic importance of Darjeeling and strongly advocated the military colonization of the hills. He referred to the views of Clive, Warren Hastings, Wellington, Munro, Bentinck,

Metcalfe, Ellenborough, Dalhousie, Malcolm, Canning, Lawrence and others, all of whom had favoured hill colonization. According to him, “The occupation of a ridge of mountain forming water parting whence issued the rivers which fertilise that adjacent lowlands must at once strike the eye of the military critic as the true line of domination of the plain country embraced within those rivers”.³¹ He therefore argued that the troops in the mountain ranges of Garhwal and Kumaon should command the Doab, through Dehra Dun, as far as Allahabad. The group of hill stations encompassing Almora, Nainital and Ranikhet should command Rohilkhand, Oudh and the area as far as the Ganges. Troops at Darjeeling should command south-east Tirhut and Bengal as far as the Brahmaputra. Moreover, in the event of war with Nepal, Newall believed that Darjeeling would constitute the refuge of the whole district and might find it difficult to maintain itself.

There were several splendid plateaus in Darjeeling and across the Tista suitably adopted for this purpose. Newall suggested that an arrangement could be made with the Raja of Sikkim according to which the country up to the frontier might be acquired in return for a pension or money gratuity. Newall hoped that “The country up to the granite walls of Thibet would then be ours, and available for settlement, and I scarcely know of any country more calculated to form a refuge or “military circle” such as I have suggested. In this fine hill district, then, since Nepal and Valley of Khatmandoo cannot be availed of, I would suggest the establishment of a Grand Southern Military Reserve Circle for Bengal”.³² It is evident that Darjeeling occupied a very important strategic location in the British Indian defence perimeter. The cantonments at Jalapahar and Katapahar developed as a spatial response to the need for defending the British Indian Empire.

Economic functions assumed significance from the 1840s. In 1835, the original village of Darjeeling had scarcely 100 inhabitants. The population grew to over ten thousand in 1849. Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker visited Darjeeling in the middle of April 1848 and stated “At the

former period there was no trade whatsoever, there is now a considerable one, in musk, salt, gold dust, borax, soda, woolen clothes and especially in ponies.” He also reported that many thousands of natives flocked from all quarters to the fair established by Dr. Cambpbell at the foot of the hills, exercising a beneficial influence throughout the neighbouring territories.³³ Trade became a major form of economic activity in Darjeeling. W.B. Jackson of the Bengal Civil Service submitted an encouraging report on the trade between Darjeeling and Tibet, published in 1854. Despite many restrictions and duties, the trade with Tibet on the Sikkim route had a value of Rs.50,000 annually. The report suggested that British manufactures could be exchanged for Tibetan gold, salt and wool. In 1857, The Calcutta Review published an account of Darjeeling. The market was on the whole well arranged and well stocked. The traders were all from the plains. The shops were erected by and remained the property of the government. Prices were not regulated by the authorities and trade was free. Traders were encouraged to settle at Darjeeling. The value of import from Lhasa to Darjeeling by the Sikkim route was about Rs.50,000 annually. Imports consisted of salt, gold, silver, precious stones and doarse woolen stuffs. The principal import was wool. The Calcutta Review hoped that Darjeeling was the gateway through which the commerce and culture of the west could reach Central Asia. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Waddell found Nepali women dressed in ‘English broad cloth’ with gaudy handkerchieves of European manufacture thrown gracefully over their heads at a Sunday market in Darjeeling. Waddell also saw that Kalimpong was a flourishing trade centre.³⁴ Charles Bell (1928) also mentioned that half the entire trade between Tibet and India had passed through this thriving town. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Dozey saw in the Darjeeling market a diverse ethnic mix: Marwaris (engaged in the money lending business), Kashmiris and Punjabis (dealers in silks, skins and furs), Nepalis (dealers in turquoise-ware, coral, amber,

jade ornaments, kukris, knives and brass-ware) Parsis (dealers in Japanese silver-ware and oilmen's stores) as well as grocers from the plains and Bhutia pawn brokers and cheap jacks.³⁵

On 20 May 1864, the Bengal Government wrote to the Superintendent of Darjeeling, pointing out that the Indo-Tibetan trade would be greatly promoted if a suitable place near Darjeeling was assigned to the Tibetan traders where they would find proper accommodation for themselves and their cattle during their stay and suggesting that land at the end of the Lebong spur was a good site. The government wanted the Superintendent to prepare a report on trade between Darjeeling and Sikkim and Tibet and also wanted details regarding trade with Nepal and Bhutan. The reply of the Superintendent mentioned that the items imported from Sikkim were horses, cattle, sheep, goats, blankets, salt, musk, wax, ghee, oranges, millets, rice, lime and copper. The imports in 1863 were nearly double those in 1860. The money earned during 1860 to 1863 amounted to Rs.89,535 of which Rs.19,450 was returned to Sikkim as goods. The articles of export to Sikkim included English cloth, metal utensils, tobacco and coral. It was hoped that improved communications would lead to great quantities of tea being exported to Sikkim and Tibet, replacing brick tea imported from Lhasa and China. Trade with Tibet consisted of the import of horses, blankets, tea, turquoise, wool, musk, ox-tails, musical instruments and shoes. The imports increased greatly during 1860 to 1863. The total price of goods sold amounted to Rs. 64,005, of which Rs.43,700 was spent in Darjeeling for the purchase of goods for export. The balance of Rs.20,305 was taken away in cash. Articles exported to Tibet included tobacco and indigo. There was a steady demand for English cotton goods, cloth and luxury items in Sikkim and Tibet, due to improved Anglo-Sikkimese relations. Trade with Nepal did not show a steady annual increase and trade with Bhutan was small though there was a large demand for cloth and cotton goods in Bhutan. The Superintendent reiterated his suggestion

for the institution of an annual fair at Darjeeling. This was the first comprehensive report on the trans- frontier trade of Darjeeling and it was of great importance. The Bengal Government was convinced that trade could be expanded considerably, especially with Sikkim and Tibet. The Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling was instructed to facilitate the enlistment of a serai and bazaar on the Lebong spur and repair important communication links through Sikkim. The Bengal Government was also most interested in the potential of tea trade. The country beyond Sikkim was one of the greatest tea consuming countries in the district.³⁶

Darjeeling became a major social meeting place for the British. Clubs such as the Darjeeling Planters' Club and the Gymkhana Club were established, while there were numerous activities such as racing at the Lebong race course, counter spurs, picnics and parties. The hill people were considered intention and mostly employed as labour in the town and the adjoining plantations. Darjeeling was also a seat of missionary activities.

After the formation of the Darjeeling district by 1866, the British government considered it a non-regulated district, not a regulated one. The difference between regulated and non-regulated districts lay in the fact that in the case of the former all laws and regulations relating to land and land revenue were enforced while in the case of the latter, all such powers were in the hands of the executive. Subsequently, the terms 'excluded' and 'scheduled' area was also applied to the Darjeeling district.³⁷

In the midst of the process of eventualities taken place in Darjeeling keeping both of its spatial and functional specificities for the first fifteen year, the Municipality of Darjeeling was established in 1850 and initially, the Municipal physical delimitations were interestingly co-extensive with those of the tract ceded in 1835 – the tract extended from the hills below Pankhabari to the borders of Sikkim to the North.

The primary intention was to bring Darjeeling under a municipal cantonment model so as to provide fund for conservancy and police establishment in the station of Darjeeling and the maintenance of roadways. With the passage of twenty-five years following the establishment of Municipality, the municipal boundaries of Darjeeling were proposed to bring in a manageable size. On 22 July 1873, the Chairman laid before the Meeting a minute of a meeting held by the Lieutenant Governor on 31 May 1873 and asked for the necessary compliance of the Direction of the Lt. Governor. Accordingly, the proposal was sent to the Government for rescheduling the boundary of Darjeeling municipality. The proposal was read as under:

“Beginning from the junction of the Rungbee and Cart Roads, the South boundary of the Ghoom-Pahar Forest reserve to a point due South of the South West angle of the boundary of the Municipal grazing ground; thence a line through the Reserve joining the two points above mentioned. Thence the West and North boundaries of the Municipal grazing ground to the Cart Road; thence the Cart Road to the boundary of location No.99 (Rose Bank) with the South and West boundaries of which the Municipal boundary will coincide. From the North West angle of the Rose Bank boundary, the Municipal boundary will be a straight line to the South West angle of location No.121. From here it will coincide with the west boundaries of locations 121, 98, 100, 139, 77, 80, 79 and 78 to the North West angle of the last mentioned location. Thence a straight line to the South West angle of No.107. Thence the west boundary of that location and the South and West boundaries of No.122; from the North West angle of 122 a straight line to the South West angle of 142. Thence the boundary of that location to the North West angle, thence a straight line to a point 182.8 metres due west of the North Western angle of location No.136. Thence a line connecting the above points to the North and East boundaries of that location. From the South East angle of No.136 a line to the North East angle of 110; then the East boundary of that location; then a line connecting its South East angle

with the North East angle of location 43: then the North East boundary of that location. Thence a line from its eastern angle in a south direction to the Birch Hill Road. Thence that road to its junction with the Lebong road; the Lebong road to its junction with the Rungeet road; and the Rungeet road to the Pandam Jhora. Thence a straight line to the Chaurasta; thence the Calcutta Road to its junction with the Cantonment road; and thence a straight line to the point where the Rungbee road cuts, the East boundary of Harrington location; thence the east boundary of Harrington location as far as the north boundaries of Graham's town location and the East boundary of Enfield location to the Cart Road. Thence the west boundary of the Cart Road reserves to the junction of the Rungbee and Cart Roads." This was to be submitted to government.³⁸

On 25 July 1882, the Chairman moved "that certain departments of Municipal works be put in charge of sub-committees or individual members, and proposed that one Committee be appointed to consider all subjects connected with conservancy, one Committee for Buildings and the Bazaar, one for Assessments, and one for Finance. After considerable discussion it was proposed by Colonel Stansfield and seconded by Mr. Clerk "that the Municipality should be divided into Sections, the Bazaar to form one section in charge of three members and that the Commissioners of each division should be authorized to draw the Engineer or Nuisance Inspector's attention to any matter requiring prompt notice, that all applications of private persons should be recorded in office, and then referred to the members in charge of the Section from which it came, if necessary, on whose Report the Executive (would) as a rule act".

Various issues discussed included the Municipal vegetable garden near the Botanic Garden. In 1875, it was resolved that the Municipal garden should be largely increased and that a sum up to Rs.70/- a month could be spent on the garden establishment. The cost of the new extension and the seeds expected from Britain were to be

met for current receipts not included in Rs.70/-. Two gentlemen were put in charge and it was also agreed to accept yearly subscribers at Rs.60/- and monthly subscribers at Rs.7/8.

On 19 March 1877 the Vice-Chairman proceeded to read the following statement showing the loss incurred in the garden since its commencement. Mr. Balmer proposed, and Dr. O'Brien seconded that considering that the Municipal Vegetable Garden had not been self-supporting in the past, nor likely to be so in the future, and considering the infinitesimal support which it received from the Rate Payers and the public generally, thereby showing that it is unappreciated and an unnecessary burden upon the Municipality, and also taking into consideration the fact that all such subsidized institutions, have a tendency to check the healthy development of private enterprise, the garden, as a Municipal Garden, should be at once discontinued.

In response, Mr. Macfarlane moved the following amendment, seconded by Dr. Purves, that the Municipal Garden be continued for one year, as it meets a great want in the station which there is no other means of supplying. The amendment was carried and the original motion withdrawn. In 1878, there was a move to append part of the Municipal garden to the Lloyd Botanic Garden. Dr. King was placed in charge of the Municipal Vegetable garden in 1879.³⁹

In 1866, rates of lands were discussed and it was proposed and carried unanimously that the Municipality levy a tax estimated to cover the cost of Police and that for the present a tax of 3 percent of houses be levied from May 1867. It was also proposed and carried unanimously that a house tax should be levied on all houses within the Municipal limits whose estimated rental exceeded Rs.40/- a year. It was also proposed and carried that such portions of the Convent Buildings as were used for educational purposes should be assessed for house tax. In 1879, it was resolved that the annual value of a house should be held to be the highest rent paid for it by the owner or

occupier during the year except as provided in section 99 of the Municipal Act. In 1881, the proceedings of the Assessment Committee were brought up and it was resolved that the committee be requested to suggest certain rates of rent, which might apply to houses at different elevations along the hillside and to different kinds of houses. It was pointed out that it would tend to encourage the building of substantial houses, to give the builders such favourable terms for Ground Rent. In 1881, the resolution of the Assessment Committee recommended the following charters be made for the use of Municipal Baracks and Stables and the land outside it and opposite Chunderbari by persons for lodging, stabling and tethering ponies. Charges for ponies tethered in the open air were 1 paise per day. For cart and 2 bullocks or the Cart and Bullocks alone : 1 anna per day. For Europeans' ponies using the serai stables : 2 annas per day or night. For person using the upper of the Serai : 1 anna per day or night, and an extra charge of $\frac{1}{2}$ anna per day or night to be levied from any person who uses the serai for the deposit of any bulky articles of merchandise of which a schedule shall be made. The changes were to be sanctioned from 1 February 1882.

Attempts were made to delineate 'status' of neighborhoods. In 1883, the report of the Assessment Sub-committee and their recommendation to raise the rates of rent for land within certain boundaries were read. It was proposed by the Chairman that the Sub-committee's recommendation of a rate not lower than one rupee per month should apply to all leases issued for occupation within the next financial year within the following boundaries: East Auckland Road, West Victoria Road, North Hospital Jhora, South the Beechwood property, and the Jhora, skirting it on the north.⁴⁰

In 1907, the area of the Municipality was 12.5 square kilometers. It began at Jorebunglow to the south and extended to a point on the road to Tukvar below St. Joseph's College to the north. It was bounded by the Calcutta Road and some land below it to the east. The boundary line ran past and below the Chaurasta and Bhotia Basti until it joined

the boundary below St. Joseph's College. It was bounded by the Cart Road and land below it to the west and the boundary line continued past and below the bazaar through the Happy Valley Tea Estate until it reached the boundary below St. Joseph's College.⁴¹ Activities undertaken by the Municipal authorities in the nineteenth century included church improvements, the division of the town into wards, matters relating to forests and the supply of wood, the improvement of the 'Native town', the rates of rent of lands, the improvement of roads, the construction of the new Town Hall and water supply.⁴²

O'Malley informed us that the administration of the Municipality was governed by the Bengal Municipal Act and by a Special Act [Act I (BC) of 1900], which was introduced to prevent the recurrence of landslips such as those of 1809. The municipal law in force in Darjeeling until then was the ordinary Municipal Act, III (B.C.) of 1884, which was in many respects in suitable to hill conditions. It was found that the landslips were in many cases due to defects which the Municipality had no power to deal with, such as the defective supervision of building sites and drainage, neglect to reduce or protect steep slopes and quarrying in unsafe localities. A Bill was introduced which passed into law as Act I of 1900, to give the Municipality the power to take measures necessary to ensure the safety of the town as well as control all roads, bridges, drains and building construction, particularly where construction threatened the security of a hill-side or bank. A complete set of building rules was also provided.⁴³

In 1907, the Municipality was administered by a Municipal Board consisting of 25 members, with the Deputy Commissioner as Chairman: 22 members were nominated by Government. Nearly all the Commissioners were Europeans. The town was divided into nine wards for administrative purposes and a Committee consisting of Commissioners reported on and attended to the affairs of each ward. There were a number of consultative committees formed for the various departments of the administration, such as the Appeal, Legal, Audit

and Finance, Assessment, Executive and Works, Sanitary and Conservancy, Water Supply and Electric Light Committees. The total number of rate payers was 2,035 or 12 percent of the population within municipal limits. The average income of the Municipality for the decade ending 1901-1902 was Rs.2,19,000. The main sources of income were a rate levied on holdings in the town at 7 percent of their annual valuation; the rents of lands and houses owned by the Municipality, including 18.2 hectares of land in the bazaar, buildings leased out as shops and residences, a Town Hall rented by the Amusement Club and two covered markets where sites were let out for the sale of meat, fish, poultry, vegetables and other items; a lighting rate, water rate, conservancy rate and the municipal market.⁴⁴

The Municipality building on the present Laden La Road was built in 1917. The foundation stone was laid by the Earl of Ronaldshay, Governor of Bengal. By 1939, the number of European Commissioners had decreased. Prominent names such as D.E. Avari, B.M. Chatterjee, C. Tenduf La and J.N. Mitra featured on the list of members while the Chairman remained A.S. Larkin. Matters discussed ranged from the pony allowance and construction of a new motor stand to supplying the public with ice. Detailed reports were kept of deaths due to diseases, the quality of food and water and the T.B. Hospital. The opening of more roads to vehicular traffic was sanctioned and Brabourne Park laid out.⁴⁵

In 1947, the average income of the Municipality was about Rs.6,50,000 from rates and taxes, markets and slaughter houses, rents of lands and buildings, hydroelectric receipts and other sources, while the expenditure was the same. The Municipality borrowed from Government and private sources. One of its most important activities was the generation of electricity and provision of water from the Senchal Lakes. The Municipality was regulated by the Bengal Municipal Act (XV of 1932).⁴⁶

Ever since the beginning Darjeeling exhibited all the ancillary forms of a colonial urban hill station having distinct plural features. There had been distinct urban spaces essentially meant for colonial military and administrative officials forming colonial zone of the hill station. There also developed a distinct urban space, an intermediate zone, within the limit of the town meant for educated, enlightened native officers and labour engaged in the lower ranks and files of administration including traders and businessmen. The third layer of the town was formed with indigenous and immigrated natives living in the peripheral zone, which was mostly poor, unskilled labour providing various form menial services according to the needs of the colonial town. Anthony King, while describing such colonial features of the hill town argued that the primary functions of Darjeeling town under British rule were political or military and therefore mostly administrative having colonial development economies and colonially cherished social modernity functions.

As a part of larger colonial development process, Darjeeling was made connected both with Roadways and Railways. During the years 1839-1842, Lord Napier of Magdala, then a young lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, was assigned with the duty to lay out the station of Darjeeling and to make a road through the virgin forest to the Terai. This road, used to be called 'old military road', was proved to be both too narrow and too steep for wheeled traffic, and it was recognized that, in the interest of Darjeeling and for the development of frontier trade, a road broad enough for carts and with an easy gradient was required for. The construction of the Darjeeling cart road subsequently known as 'Hill Cart Road', was accordingly begun in 1861 to establish uninterrupted traffic with the plains.⁴⁷

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was put in place in 1881 reducing the travelling time for passengers/visitors as well as providing for the transport of tea and timber.⁴⁸ The importance of Darjeeling as an economic and strategic centre accelerated the implementation of the

DHR as the main mode of transport in the Himalayan foothills of Northern Bengal. At the time of its inception, the DHR was a commercial railway carrying freight and running regular mail trains serving the new needs of the region as it developed as a military base and tea production centre. The DHR was introduced in 1881 into the hills of Darjeeling as a vehicle for the economic and social development of colonial India

In 1878, Franklin Prestage, an agent of Eastern Bengal Railway proposed a hill tramway of 2ft gauge following the alignment of the Hill Cart Road. The construction started in 1879 under the name of the Darjeeling Himalayan Tramway Co and the work was carried out in a simultaneous process on unconnected sections. In March 1880, the then Viceroy of India, Lord Lytton, visited the line. The same year in August, the line opened for public use between Siliguri and Kurseong. The line was connected to the Darjeeling main station and the title of the company was changed to the DHR Co. in September 1881. In the following years, the DHR developed remarkably with the introduction of loops and reverses to ease the gradients and with the B-class locomotives brought on to the line in 1888. By 1914, the DHR was carrying an annual average of 250,000 passengers and 60,000 tonnes of freight. The intense traffic of World War I led to an all time peak of 300,000 passengers. The famous 'Batasia Loop' was constructed in 1919, eliminating problems by creating an easier gradient on the ascent from Darjeeling. During World War II, Darjeeling became a 'rest and recuperation' centre for the British armed forces and thus, the traffic on the DHR line increased significantly.⁴⁹

Since then, the DHR has evolved both as a mode of transport and as a form of heritage. In December 1999, the DHR secured World Heritage Status at the 23rd Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in Morocco. In the brief description of the DHR, the World Heritage Committee report (UNESCO 2009) stated that: 'The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is the first, and still the most

outstanding example of a hill passenger railway. Opened in 1881, it applied bold and ingenious engineering solutions to the problems of establishing an effective rail link across a mountainous terrain of great beauty. It is still fully operational and retains most of its original features intact’.

Weise tries to put this in some detail: “*The railway begins on the plains of Bengal and soon begins climbing through a remnant of lowland jungle, including stands of teak. As the railway climbs, so the flora changes and its upper sections are dominated by enormous Himalayan pines, which in misty weather give a surreal quality to the landscape. It frequently hugs the ages of hillsides with drops, often of thousands of feet, to the plains and valleys below. Towering over the entire scene is the perennially snow-covered bulk of Kanchenjunga, at 28,146ft (8579 m) the third highest mountain in the world. From Kurseong (31 miles or 49 km from Siliguri at an elevation of 4846ft or 1524 m) the railway offers frequent views of this stupendous mountain, which by Ghoom dominates the entire landscape. Thus from the tiny train, the passenger can look down on the stifling tropical plains of Bengal or up into the eternal snows of the highest peaks of the Himalaya. No railway anywhere else offers such sight.*”⁵⁰

In accordance with the colonial objectives, military garrisons, cantonments were first established in the top hills of Jalapahar at the South East end and at Lebong situated at the North End after keeping space at the middle locations meant for administrative centre, residence of the British officials, church institutions, missionary educational institutions, hospitals, post-offices, markets, the mal area at the top hills of the middle section of the demarcated urban space of Darjeeling. The social scape of Darjeeling witnessed the initiation of sports and game by the Army and British administration, the Gymkhana Club, Lebong race course ground for example. The social scape experienced the creation of plantation culture as an extension of European social life. The consolidation of British rule led to the

establishment of temporary summer residence of the Governor General. The corresponding administrative offices and other social institutions were created. New systems of water supply, sanitation, civic amenities and urban electrification were kept in place.

Like other British built hill stations, Darjeeling was established by the British from the scratches to provide variety of functions, principally to serve British troops and administrative officials. Urban formation of Darjeeling was primarily responsible for two purposes; establishment of sanatorium and installation of strategic military station. Eden sanatorium meant for Europeans and Lowis Jubilee Sanatorium for the natives were established in 1882 and 1887 respectively ⁵¹ and for the latter the land for such erection was gifted by Maharaja of Cooch-behar, located down to Railway Station The sanatorium of Darjeeling served as a refuge to British officials from the burning heat of the plains. Darjeeling was shaped as a healthy location for European troops and officials. It was designated as a defense outpost in a strategically important border area of India and China via Tibet at the one end and Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim on the other to guard the nearly built British imperial frontier in mountain zones of the Eastern Himalayas. From the economic point of view, Darjeeling evolved gradually as a growth centre of trades and services and marketing centre of tea and cinchona plantation produce.

Christian missionaries played most pioneering role in institutionalizing basic education for common people both in vernacular and Hindi in the multi-lingual and multi-ethnic Darjeeling. The municipal authorities as well as the Government reposed faith on the Church of Scotland Mission and the government fund for education had been entrusted to the Mission for expenditure. Except Darjeeling High School, all the primary schools were kept under control of the Church of the Scotland Mission. Lower primary, upper primary Schools and middle vernacular schools and two training schools were established in the late eighteen sixties for spreading education amongst

the lower class and tea labour children and working class people under the apt leadership of Mr. Macfarlane who had to face extreme hardship to bring working class children to the class-room. Mr. Macfarlane remarked in 1873, "...All that the hill people care for their boys to learn are the merest element of reading, writing and arithmetic. ...Accordingly, we find that many boys, as soon as they have gone through the primer, consider their education finished. They can read and write to their own and their parents' satisfaction and that is all they care for."⁵² However, since the beginning of twentieth century, primary education scenario had shown a positive tilt in the face of well established European system of education.

Darjeeling High School was raised to the status of a High School in 1892 originally used to be known as Bhotia School. It was made open to common people children composed of immigrants from the plains, such as the Government clerks, Bengali and Hindustani residents in Darjeeling, while the rests were mostly Nepalis and very few Lepchas and Bhotias. The school was practically divided into two departments, one being a High School, and the other an elementary school for boys in belonging to the hill tribes.

Once Darjeeling town was connected with plains attempts were made to make it the home of European Education in India. Bishop Cotton advocated for the establishment of hill schools for Europeans in and around Darjeeling. His efforts were supported by Lord Canning and he pointed out in his Minute, "how the domiciled English and Eurasians would, if neglected, become profitless, unmanageable, and a glaring reproach to the Government, while, if properly cared for, they might become a source of strength to British rule and of usefulness to India."⁵³ As a result of such movements from the highest office, several English medium schools were established. The Loreto convent, the oldest school in Darjeeling, was founded by the Loreto nuns in 1846. St. Paul's School was transferred in 1864 from Calcutta to Darjeeling and became premier educational institution both for the Europeans

and Eurasians. Another chief educational institution was the St Joseph's College under the management of the Jesuit Fathers was founded in 1888. There established two girls' schools, the Diocesan Girls' School for Protestants and the Loreto Convent School for Roman Catholics and St. Michael's School for girls, under the management of the Sisters of the Order of St. John Baptist was founded in 1887. Mount Hermon School conducted by Methodist Episcopal Church of America was founded in 1895. By the end of nineteenth century, there were at least ten schools committing European education were opened in Darjeeling town.⁵⁴

By 1857, Darjeeling attracted the attention of the British as a centre for the recruitment of Gorkha soldiers. The British drew bitter experience from the Sepoy Revolt of 1857 and reposed faith in the unquestionable loyalty of the Gurkhas as British soldiers. From 1886 to 1904, as many as 27428 Gurkha soldiers were recruited there over. Newall remarked, "the Highlands of India', strongly advocated for the military colonization of the hills and felt that Darjeeling could become a 'reserve circle' of British troops to protect Bengal" (Referred in Sen, 1989). Cantonments were established at Darjeeling situated on the ridges of Katapahar and Jalapahar above the main town and on the spur of Lebong below it.⁵⁵

Resultantly, Darjeeling town was grown and established as a prerequisite of East Indian Company, at its head-quarters at Calcutta, in the mid of nineteenth century. Darjeeling hill station was considered to be nearest to East India Company head-quarters, for example, Shimla at the North and Shilong at the East, which were developed as hill stations before Darjeeling, were situated reasonably far off Calcutta. In the establishment and growth of Darjeeling, the discourse and praxis of climate, health and commerce were inseparable; the expansion of its trade was achieved by poaching territories from Sikkim and Bhutan. The area of Darjeeling tracts were primarily annexed from the Gorkha

kingdom of Nepal ⁵⁶ and the Kalimpong hills and Dooars parts were annexed from Bhutan.

Like other British Indian Hill Stations, Darjeeling was established around the nucleus of a church, Cutchery (administrative office), bazaar and a few houses.⁵⁷ Initially, Darjeeling was considered as a frontier zone opening opportunities to enterprising Europeans. There arrived the Wernicke-Stolke family, for instance, in 1841 as Morevian Missionaries, one of three families.⁵⁸ “The development of Darjeeling as a hill station, sanatorium and cantonment offered chances for anyone with initiative”.⁵⁹ Johann Wernicke began supplying timber from the nearby forest to government, and then providing bricks from his own kilns for building construction. He prospered with the town. His grandson was sent to England to receive an expansive public school education.⁶⁰ Gradually, Darjeeling had become the base for the exploration of the eastern Himalayan frontiers of the British Empire in India, both for its rich natural history as well as untapped resources and trading networks.

Joseph Dalton Hooker, a botanist of repute visited Darjeeling in 1848 and found it a pleasant town with a resident European population. During his eventful visit of long two years, he compared Darjeeling’s growth with Australian colony, “not only in amount of building, but in the accession of native families from the surrounding countries”.⁶¹ Hooker argued further, “At the former period there was no trade whatsoever; there is now a very considerable one, in musk, salt, gold dust, borax, soda, woolen cloths and especially in ponies.... The trade has been greatly increased by the annual fair which Dr. Cambell has established at the foot of the hills, to which many thousands of natives flock from all quarters, and which exercises a most beneficial influence throughout the neighbouring territories”.⁶² Thus, while Darjeeling had been proved popular with convalescent or leisure seeking Europeans, the efforts of Campbell further established its position as a trading centre for the surrounding areas. Such trades also

encouraged immigration from Nepal.⁶³ J.T. Pearson, an army surgeon who arrived in Darjeeling in 1839, observed, “there is an elasticity of the air in these mountains, and a freshness,exercise gives all the pleasant glow of an English walk on a frosty morning”.⁶⁴ Thus the well established common assumption was that the tropical plains had divested the English constitution of natural self. The mountains were posited to restore it.

Brian Hodgson, formerly British Resident at Kathmandu, who spent a considerable number of years of his retired life in Darjeeling, explained clearly, “The fearful epidemics of the plains seldom penetrate the Himalayas, which, moreover, seem to have a positive exemption from epidemic diseases. For forty years cholera has ravaged the plains continually. But in all that period Nepal has been visited only twice and Darjeeling scarcely at all.”⁶⁵ Hodgson’s observation validated the need for high altitude sanatorium towns for the British in India. Hooker also endorsed the rejuvenating qualities of Darjeeling for Europeans.⁶⁶ The Jalapahar convalescent depot for British troops was built in 1848 located on a narrow ridge above the Mall in Darjeeling. By 1859, it included barracks, a hospital and officers’ quarters.⁶⁷ A second cantonment was built in 1844 at senchal, close to Darjeeling.⁶⁸ The Senchal cantonment was abandoned in 1867 and was shifted to Jalapahar owing to its isolation and bitter cold.

The nineteenth century colonial urbanization in Darjeeling characterized all the dichotomies either reflected through race and climate or hill plains differences. Like other important colonial hill station, Darjeeling experienced a conflation of the spatial and the racial dichotomies characterized through hill plains dichotomy and white versus native dichotomy in terms of habitational location and functional privileges. However, at the same time, they had their limits and were often breached. The cherished dichotomies have been widely reflected in the writing of Hill Stations of Kennedy while he argued, “the rush for these hill stations in the nineteenth century reflected the need

to carve out a social space that was European and sanitized, as the towns in the plains of India increasingly came to be identified with dirt and filth. There was an architectural and social distancing between Indians and Europeans in these towns: the native bazaars were always located separately, and at a lower elevation from the European habitations. Physical distance was expressive of social distance.”⁶⁹ The Urban Darjeeling replicated sites of leisure in Europe but was ultimately subverted by colonial realities arising out of colonial commercial and revenue enterprises.

The colonial hill station Darjeeling had been the abode of the realization of the notion of leisure revolving round the clubs offering European company, whisky, beer, gin, afternoon tea, bridge, tennis and occasional cricket match, amateur theatre, walking on Mall. The forests around Darjeeling also inspired sporting men as much as it did naturalists. When the Darjeeling Natural History Society was founded in 1923, the articles mostly comprised hunting anecdotes. With its characteristic architecture and topography as a distinct urban colonial space, Darjeeling carried forward a tradition of European segregated space from the Urban spaces in the plains. In the nineteenth century colonial mind, the idea of sport was associated with leisure and a sporting world came to constitute the various outdoor pursuits of ‘hunting, racing, shooting, angling, cricket, walking’⁷⁰. Urban settlements like Darjeeling embodied ideal conditions for recreation, leisure as well as rejuvenation for the European elites. After 1857, medical opinion and political and administrative expediency encouraged the sustenance of hill stations like Darjeeling. Although functionally similar to the ‘white towns’ of the plains, the topographically unique hill stations like Darjeeling evoked a romantic idyll that was scenic and yet were intensely urban. The temperate climate, and the familiarizing and domesticating of the mountains and dense forests that rendered them similar to British landscapes and to

the Alps. Moreover, the summer of the provincial administration to Darjeeling town lent its social space glamour and urgency.⁷¹

During colonial rule, Darjeeling retained its reputation as a sanatorium town where leisure, governance and a healthy lifestyle all appealed to the British and, eventually, to the Indians as well. The Eden Sanatorium Hospital was founded in 1882 to cater exclusively to Europeans and the Lowis Jubilee Sanitarium for Indians was set up in 1887⁷² with donations from the Indian landed aristocrats. Thus the contest for social space in health occasionally brought tussles between European and Indian elites. For example, in 1906, the Civil Surgeon of the town of Darjeeling ruled against a 'Pthisis Ward' in the Lowis Jubilee Sanitarium on the grounds that the climate of Darjeeling would make consumptive patients worse. The Governor of Bengal, Sir Andrew Fraser, endorsed his opinion. As a reaction, objections were raised in Bengal Legislative Assembly. 'The Bengalee' demanded, "Are we to understand that what is good for the Eden Sanitarium, to which only Europeans are admitted, is not good for the Lowis Jubilee Sanitarium which is resorted to by 'natives' only?"⁷³ Ultimately, the Government gave in and the 'Pthisis Ward' was retained.

By the end of nineteenth century, the Bengalees principally the landed aristocrats, successful professionals like doctors, barristers, business men and bureaucrats had made their stake felt in Darjeeling. Both the Maharajas of Cooch-behar and Burdwan possessed their respective summer palaces in Darjeeling.⁷⁴ Many others visited during summer, staying at one of the several boarding houses that sprang up to cater to Indian visitors.⁷⁵ The demography of the entire Darjeeling area as well as the town itself changed drastically due to large immigration from Eastern Nepal. This was the consequence of a policy adopted by Campbell to populate and settle the entire district and to provide the labour to sustain the European habitation in the town. Thus, Darjeeling kept expanding in concert with extension of imperial control over eastern Himalayan economy and trade. The town of

Darjeeling became the hub of Material transformation of the entire region. The British encouraged trade between the borders and even fuelled dreams of a trans-Tibetan trade the subject of many treaties with Nepal as well as with Tibet.⁷⁶

Nepali immigration received tremendous momentum, when the tea plantation - a labour intensive industry, took off commercially in the Darjeeling tract by 1856. The rise of tea industry and the growth of immigrated Nepali population went hand in hand and had exposed Darjeeling critical to the colonial economy, apart from its distinctive landscape. Indeed, Tea industry and its growth contributed most to the transformation of the functional and spatial bases of the entire Darjeeling hills. Tea industry brought about the demographic transformation and encroachment within the town itself. Cambell recounted, ‘when I took charge there were not more than fifty families in the whole tract ... In 1861, when I left Darjeeling, the total population was estimated at 60,000.’⁷⁷

Nandini Bhattacharya has arguably stated that “*the fundamental tension between the romantic sanatorium town and the colonial hill station was heightened in magnitude from the turn of the century, when its absorption within the larger colonial economy was entrenched with the successes of the tea and timber industry, its popularity as a resort and the ever increasing business of the colonial bureaucracy. These tensions were played out in negotiations for urban spaces within the town.*”⁷⁸ By the beginning of twentieth century, Darjeeling, as a colonial urban settlement, had started suffering from ‘overcrowding’ as was reflected in the writings of the British administrators and of the Indian elite. Along with more British settlements, residences, clubs of the tea planters, summer retreats of the Indian elite, there was steady rise of Nepal population immigrating to Darjeeling in search of better livelihood. The issue of European exclusivity was put in question.

Located on a Y shaped ridge, the town of Darjeeling had 70 'villas' and few large houses in 1870 and by 1922, this number rose to 351.⁷⁹ The Mall, the highest point in the town, skirted the Government House while parallel roads would follow below, accommodating European hotels, villas and offices. The end of the Mall followed a path to the Bhotia Monastery, flanked by 'Bhotia busti' at the bottom of the ridge; where the local Lepchas as well as immigrant labourers lived. The commercial road largely comprised of European establishments, including the Senchal Dairy Farm, Ottewill's Millinery Establishments, Smith-Stani street (Pharmacists), the Post Office and the Planters' Club and led down the hill side of the Cart Road and market square (the bazaar). The market square accommodated Indian commercial concerns, including Marwari wholesale grocers and suppliers. The location of market remained very nearer to Railways station of Darjeeling. Down beyond the bazaar was 'Chandmari', the Indian quarter of the town, occupied by Bengali clerks and professionals. The Indian boarding houses and hotels were located at the bottom of the ridge.⁸⁰

Indian Aristocrats and land lords of the plains such as Zamindars of Darbhanga and the Maharajah of Koch Behar owned large houses located on the road skirting the Mall. By the 1920s, 'Southfields' was the property of the Bengali Industrialist Sir R.N. Mukherjee. By the 1920s, the Cooch-Bihar mansion was transferred back to the Government.⁸¹ While Indian Zamindars such as the Rajah of Digpatia or the Maharaja of Burdaran preferred to build palaces with reasonably huge land at a distance from town centre, affluent Bengalis preferred residences closer to the Mall, the European part of the town. The enhancing numbers of the population composing of residents and seasonal visitors presented a critical multi-cultural character of the population of the town. Growing number of visitors both Europeans and elite natives, managers and babus of the burgeoning tea plantations, constellations of huge number of Nepali migrant labourers in Darjeeling town gave rise to a critical demographic character. During

World War I, Darjeeling became an important strategic location from defence point of view the town was designated as military and air base for British troops.⁸²

Retention of social exclusivity of Darjeeling played a major role. One way of retaining such exclusivity of the town of Darjeeling for the Europeans and affluent India elites was to develop alternative hill sanatoria for them. In 1903, the municipal Commissioner of Kurseong, a small location at a lower height, appealed to the government to develop it as a hill resort (Address presented to the Lieutenant Governor by the Municipal Commissioner of Kurseong and Reply.⁸³ The Government responded positively and stated that Darjeeling was 'greatly in need of relief from overcrowding' and that the climate of Kurseong' is better adapted than that of Darjeeling'.⁸⁴ Indeed, Maharaja of Burdwan contributed Rs.20,000 for the extension of the hill cart road to Kurseong and offered further assistance.⁸⁵

British as well as the Indians attributed to deforestation within the town. As a result, the 'native' settlements within Darjeeling were pushed to new areas. In 1906, the district officials appealed to the Government for permission construction at the Toong Soong Basti as declared condemned as an unsafe area by the Landslip Committee.⁸⁶ The Government flatly denied the proposal of new construction or reconstruction on the said area (Ibid). Despite restrictions, the town of Darjeeling continued to grow unabated at the ridges. The perceptions of the 'overcrowding' of Darjeeling brought about comparisons with the typical urban problems of towns in the plains. For instance, in 1918, the Municipal commissioners of Darjeeling thought it necessary to raise the fine for begging in the town to put an end to professional beggary to Rs.50, a sum that exceeded the monthly income of a clerk.⁸⁷

Despite population exodus at the turn of twentieth century, Darjeeling remained as an exclusive urban space represented through well maintained roads, provisions for sewerage, and electricity with a

generous grants to maintain the facilities. In 1921, the Government noted that ‘improvements were effected in the water-supply, drainage, electric lighting and municipal buildings’.⁸⁸ The same year witnessed Government making special efforts preserving greenery of Darjeeling towards making it more environment friendly, ‘arboriculture, as carried out in the town of Darjeeling differed from that work as done elsewhere in Bengal. The Darjeeling Improvement Fund devoted attention to planting up the slips and other bare areas, with a views to ensuring safety of the hill slides [which] have added to the beauty of the town.’⁸⁹ In 1923, facilities within the municipal area of Darjeeling were extensive, ‘Improvements were effected in water supply, drainage, electric lighting and municipal buildings’.⁹⁰ The town of Darjeeling grew with its unique institutions like the Eden and Lewis Jubilee Sanitoriums, the Governor’s summer residence, Gymkhana Club, Mall, Planters’ Club and some sprawling European hotels and race course field at Lebong and educational institutions of European structures.

Darjeeling remained as exclusive both in administrative and political and social terms. The colonial state maintained the difference of the hills from the plains for politico-economic reasons. The hill people of Darjeeling from the very beginning of colonial days were thus trained in the logic of difference but hardly realized the hidden colonial design of exploitation camouflaged as differential politico-administrative arrangements.⁹¹ The development and expansion involved related corresponding developments by way of integration with larger colonial economy making Darjeeling as the nodal centre of trade of the region. Taking all the socio-economic and demographic dynamics into consideration Darjeeling witnessed large natural transformation which it turn ushered in ecological and landscape changes.

Thus Darjeeling under British rule did no longer remain purely as an exclusive space for the Europeans, it was also meant for the colonial elites for leisure’s, planters for making money, common people for subsistence and babus and clerks for making fortunes. Darjeeling

thus famed as a sanatorium towns and a socio-economic hub of the elite, inhabited by coolies (labours), clerks, railway men and traders as well as surrounded by the tea plantations. The hill town of Darjeeling, thus, needs to be seen as a part of the continuum of colonial urbanism and its unique place in colonial urban history.

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