

PREFACE

A Geographical Study on Urbanization and Associated Problems in North Bengal has been undertaken to study the process of urbanization unfolding in North Bengal in recent years. North Bengal consisting of the six northern most districts of West Bengal viz. Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Maldah is one of the most backward regions of India and the state of West Bengal. The history of urbanization in North Bengal was very fragmented with very few urban centres developing before the coming of the British. Infact the process of urbanization has really taken off only after 2001 with a huge increase in the number of urban centres across all the districts of North Bengal. Therefore, it is very important to study the recent trends and trajectory of urban development in North Bengal.

For a systematic study the total work has been divided into seven chapters.

Chapter 1 – Introduction: In this chapter an introduction to the topic was made. The literatures related to the topic were studied. The problems were pin pointed. The objectives were set. The hypotheses were formulated. The data base to be used and methodology to be followed was laid down.

Chapter 2 – History of Urbanization in North Bengal: In this chapter the major focus has been to analyze the history of urban development in North Bengal. For a systematic study the history of urban development in this region was divided into three periods viz. the pre British period, British Period and Post Independence Period.

Chapter 3 - Recent Trend of Urbanization and growth of Urban Centres in North Bengal: In this chapter the recent trends of urbanization in North Bengal was analyzed at the district level as well as for individual urban centres. Analysis was done for the level of urbanization, urban - rural ratio of population, tempo of urbanization, growth rate of urban population, location quotient, rank-size relationship, H-Index, urban population density, statutory and census towns, size-class analysis, population balance sheet etc.

Chapter 4 - Social and Economic Characteristics of Urban Centres in North Bengal: In this chapter the socio-economic characteristics of urban centres of North Bengal were analyzed with respect to percentage of scheduled caste population, percentage of scheduled tribe population, literacy rate, sex-ratio and percentage of main, marginal and non workers respectively.

Chapter 5 - Urban Infrastructure Development in North Bengal: In this chapter a number of indicators of infrastructure development were identified and then the composite index of infrastructure development for each urban centre of North Bengal was calculated. Based on the composite index of infrastructure development the urban centres were classified into high, medium, low and very low level of infrastructure development.

Chapter 6 - Problems of Urbanization in North Bengal: In this chapter the problems associated with rapid urbanization in North Bengal were analyzed. The problems related to slum proliferation, housing condition mainly related to availability of safe drinking water, electricity facility, latrine facility, bathroom facility, drainage facility and availability of separate kitchen were considered. The problems associated with drinking water quality, noise pollution, air quality and traffic volume were also analyzed for randomly selected 67 urban centres of North Bengal based on primary survey.

Chapter 7 - Policy recommendation and Conclusion: This is the last chapter where concluding remarks and policy recommendation were made after a detailed study of the process of urbanization unfolding in North Bengal.

Arindam Basak
12.10.2018

Arindam Basak

Department of Geography & Applied Geography

University of North Bengal