

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The resurgence of interest in small and medium towns to generate more widespread and equitable economic development has stemmed out of primarily threefold considerations : the weight of the arguments about the need for a diffused and integrated system of settlements to promote economic with social equity; the reactions against the undesirable results of "top down" macro-economic approaches to development which failed to consider the lowest levels of the Spatial system; and pragmatic policy stemming out of the adverse effects in Third World countries of trends in urbanisation and rural development. (1)

Nevertheless, the debate still persists over the degree to which small urban centres should be the focus of regional development strategy and over the degree of linkage that should be encouraged with the respective hinterlands. (2) In reality, at the heart of the debate lies a number of questions. These are : do small and medium towns perform important functions justifying heavy national investment in their development? Can deliberate efforts to stimulate the growth and diversification of small towns be effectively planned and implemented? Would investments in the development of small towns and cities result in higher national economic development?

An attempt to answer these questions may be made. Theoretically, the argument for developing small and medium towns hinges on central place theory ⁽³⁾ which underlines the need for the creation of an articulated and integrated system of settlements composed of towns and cities of different sizes and functions. Small towns are viewed as nodes of trade and commerce in the network of market centres; they are also seen as the links between agricultural areas and urban centres in respect of distribution of goods and services. In other words, widespread economic development is contingent upon diffused and integrated system of central places. Urban centres make services that require fixed locations or large number of consumers available to people living in rural areas. Goods produced in one community must be assembled in local collection points and distributed to consumers through markets. Thus, each community can specialize in those goods and services that it can produce most advantageously while having access to goods and services produced in other areas. An articulated and integrated hierarchy of settlements provides potential access for people living throughout the country to markets of different sizes and to a wide variety of urban amenities.

It is argued that the absence of such a hierarchy of settlements hinders the emergence of a sectorally and geographi-

eally balanced pattern of economic growth. E.A.J. Johnson has strongly pleaded for such hierarchy on the strength of empirical evidences from both Western industrial countries and in more advanced economies in the developing world. ⁽⁴⁾ Without such a Spatial system, it is stated, the developing countries suffer from number of inhibitations: (a) it becomes difficult to achieve geographically diffuse development and reduce regional and urban-rural disparities; (b) in the absence of integrated system of intermediate cities and small towns, agriculturists cannot have access to the market centres for setting their surpluses, obtain inputs, modernize their technology and adapt products to consumer demand; (c) this would deny the people living in rural areas to obtain the goods and services needed for better living. Rondinalli and Ruddle have mentioned that small and medium towns play crucial role in stimulating the development of rural areas, thus "they offer economies of scale for a wide variety of basic social and economic activities, organize the economics of their hinterlands, provide access for rural people to basic services and facilities, provide access to transportation and communications networks, offer off-farm employment opportunities in tertiary or secondary sectors and provide access to markets, services and facilities in larger towns and cities." ⁽⁵⁾

Small and Medium towns received attention as an upshot of the dissatisfaction with ^mMacro-^eEconomic theories which pres-

cribed concentration of heavy investment for maximising the growth of national output. Many economists argued in favour of more capital investment in developing countries for the highest rates of return ⁽⁶⁾. In other words, the vast sizes of the primate cities are not economically inefficient and the high capital investment in these centres would stimulate the growth of G.N.P. and through spread and trickle down effects the benefits are likely to percolate down to the rural poor. Despite strong arguments advanced in favour of heavy investment in primate cities, there has been no agreement on optimal city size i.e. population size at which marginal social benefits equal marginal social costs. In 1970s concentrated investment theories came under fire as the developing countries turned away from the goal of maximizing economic growth as an end ⁱⁿ itself and sought to evolve a new growth strategy for providing basic public and social services to wider section of the community. The object of such a strategy is to enlarge their productivity and generate employment potential and income and researches ⁽⁷⁾ on the city-size indicate that small and intermediate cities offer sufficient economies of scale for investment in a wide range of public utilities, infrastructures, social services, commercial activities and small and medium sized agro-processing and manufacturing enterprises.

The growth of massive metropolitan areas and primate cities has led to creation of colossal social and economic problems which the developing countries hardly have resources ^{to} grapple with.

For illustration, the large cities in Latin America and Asia have services problems in respect of housing, transportation, pollution control, employment generation and slum. Difficulties in extending and even maintaining existing ^S~~A~~ sewer, water and drain and utility services, not unoften, create health and sanitation problems in thickly populated squatter areas. Such difficulties are beginning to appear in metropolitan and large cities in Middle East and Africa. (8)

While making investments in Primate Cities economists have failed to note the social costs of massive urban agglomeration. An objective assessments of the cost of meeting social needs in the large metropolises have produced extremely high estimates that developing countries can hardly afford to meet. Unikel (9) and Prakash (10) have estimated the cost of the national governments for meeting the basic civic amenities in Mexico city and Asia's largest population centers respectively on the basis of projected population in 1990s. These provide strong support to the need for capacity building and increasing the number of small and intermediate towns for the sake of relieving the population pressures on the large metropolises and distributing the urban population evenly among them.

Despite planned efforts directed to stave off rural migration to large metropolitan centres, by increasing productivity and improving living conditions in rural areas in developing

countries, the rate of such migration as yet remains high. About half of the population increase in the largest centres of the developing countries has been attributed to rural migration. About rural poverty-stricken countries like Indonesia Pakistan, Bangladesh and India the World Bank writes "intensive pressure on land the rural population per square Kilometer of arable land is expected to double in the next 25 years which, even if it leads to a small percentage of out-migration from rural areas, will lead to massive growth in the cities."⁽¹¹⁾ A survey report of 116 government proposed by the United Nations in 1978, on current population distribution noted that 68 were "strongly" dissatisfied, 42 "partially" dissatisfied and only 6 governments considered the patterns acceptable⁽¹²⁾. Such dissatisfaction has been buttressed by criticisms against the assumptions of the investment strategies, namely, benefits would automatically "trickle down" and thereby reducing rural-urban and inter-regional disparities. Experiences in developing countries show that large metropolitan cities Chip-off Capital, Labour, raw materials and entrepreneurs from their rural hinterlands. Thus, the optimistic view that economic growth would result in an increase of regional per capita income has not been supported by evidence.⁽¹³⁾

(a) Development Strategies:

Undeniably, urban and rural development are mutually complementary. By acting as catalysts the system of small and

medium towns can play an important role in achieving economic growth with greater social equity. Such a development strategy has received wide recognition in the strategies of International Assistance Agencies and plan documents of developing countries in the decade commencing from 1970. It has become manifestly clear that growth with equity requires not only increasing agricultural productivity in rural areas but also expanding the capacity of the secondary and tertiary sectors to provide goods and services and to absorb surplus rural labour. This stresses upon the need for having a string of urban centres from small towns and market centers to medium size towns and metropolitan areas.

In Asia, the overwhelming majority of the population is distributed in small villages, 80 p.c. of India's population, for illustration, lives in villages of less than 5000 people and nearly 93 p.c. of the rural settlements have population less than 2000 people. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Studies of North-eastern Thailand highlight that towns are in symbiotic relationship with rural areas surrounding them. They are the local source of agriculturally related capital goods and services upon which modernization of the subsistence systems is dependent ⁽¹⁵⁾. In pursuance of this strategy for development some theorists pleaded for shifting investment from the large metropolitan regions to the rural areas and households. Friedmann proposed an agropolitan development strategy with two fold objectives : to focus on rural districts

and villages and to discourage linkages with larger cities and modern sector. Others, however, felt that such a strategy without the provision for linking rural areas with larger settlements is likely to disperse investments so widely that they would have little impact. But these strategies came under increasing criticisms during 1970s. An alternative approach providing a more diffused pattern of urbanisation in which small and intermediate towns play an important role in integrating urban and rural economics has been suggested. Such a strategy is likely to result in (a) prevention of strong locational disparities in income and wealth; (b) systematic inter-relationship between countryside and city progressively reducing the differences in levels of living and opportunity. There has been increasing recognition of the strategy in developing countries for the potential benefits of an articulated and integrated settlement system for the promotion of economic growth with social equity. As an action programme of the strategy there exists a strong case for strengthening small and intermediate urban centres. The policy of building up a system of small towns, market centres, regional centres and intermediate cities has found favour with USAID for (a) dispersing urban population in various human settlements which in turn would reduce^eng, if not stop, the flow of migration toward the primate cities; (b) building up centers of urban activity which can serve as (16) regional catalysts for geographical distribution of development.

The report of UN conference on Human Settlements 1970, recommended for the establishment of towns of appropriate size as socio-economic cultural centres for linkages with their rural hinterlands.

(b) Roles and functions of Small and Medium towns:-

Small and intermediate towns, perform, as evidences from countries show, important economic, social and physical functions that can make important contributions to regional and national development. Rondinelli has enumerated tenfold functions thus: (17)

- 1). They can provide convenient locations for decentralizing public services through field offices of national ministries or agencies or regional or provincial government offices, thereby creating greater access for both urban and rural residents to public services and facilities that require minimum population thresholds;
- 2). They usually offer a wide variety of consumers goods, Commercial and personal services through small scale enterprises and through informal activities;
- 3). They act as rural marketing centers catering a wide variety of services, such as, distribution, transfer, storage, brokerage credit and financial services through regularly scheduled and institutionalized markets or through periodic markets or bazards;

4). Not unoften, they provide conditions conducive to the growth of small and medium-scale manufacturing, artisan and cottage industries which can serve local markets and satisfy internal demand for low cost manufactured goods. Some of them support large-scale industries;

5). They can offer sufficient economics of scale to allow the location within them of health, education, welfare and other services and act as local or regional centres extending a variety of basic, social services and facilities;

6). Many acts as agro-processing and agricultural supply centers for their regions and provide services to rural populations in their hinterlands;

7). They often create conditions that are conducive to the commercialization of agriculture and to increasing agricultural productivity and income in their immediately surrounding hinterlands;

8). They can be sources of off-farm employment and supplementary income for rural people;

9). They act as centers of transportation and communications, linking their residents and those of rural villages and towns;

10). They can function as centers of social transformation, absorbing rural migrants who, otherwise, would have gone to the largest city, accommodating social heterogeneity and encouraging the integration of people from diverse communities, ~~providing~~ providing organisations so as to help in socialising and assimilating rural people into city life.

To cite case studies in support of the above would not be out of place here. The studies on rural towns in West Bengal show that small towns with the population size of 5000 act as "Minimal urban centers" in their respective regions. These towns perform the following functions : They (a) serve as economic, political and cultural centers for the population of the villages in the surrounding rural micro-region; (b) provide a market place where not only local but also non-local products are sold and specialized goods and services are available; (c) provide the wide range of occupational specialists not usually found in rural villages but very much necessary for the support of a primary agricultural rural population; (d) serve as a meeting point of administrative and educational specialists representing wider society; (e) are characterized by extreme diversity in occupation and heterogeneity in population compared to their relative size as urban centers; (f) characteristically draw a large segment of the elite population from far outside the immediate locality, re-

recruiting on the basis of education and experience in specialized administrative, professional and educational positions. (18)

Johnson has studied small central places in India and observed that they are particularly conducive to the types of commercial and industrial activity that cater to local, short-range market demand and that have a small potential number of customers who come by on foot, bicycle or other force of transport. (19) The studies on rural industries in South Korea and Taiwan indicate that small towns and cities, besides supporting resource processing activities are all good locations for small market-oriented activities as such as animal feed shops, ice manufacturing plants, clay building products, earthenware and hand tool producers and makers of small concrete products. Medium towns support a wider variety of services including commercial printing, motor vehicle repair and small machine, galvanising and metal processing shops. (20)

These are illustrations of functional roles of the small and intermediate towns in developing countries. Studies of the people who migrated from rural areas to small and medium size towns in North-eastern Thailand support that most migrants were able to increase their incomes and find better educational and health facilities than in their villages of origin. (21)

Thus, small and medium towns in developing countries under proper conditions can and do perform a wide variety of

functions - Social, Economic and Service - which help the process of regional and national development. In reality, they release the growth impulses for the development of their hinterlands, for transforming subsistence rural societies into commercial agricultural areas and finally, for integrating rural and urban economies in developing nations. In 1960s development through 'Growth pole' was attempted in the developing countries. But the strategy was found "neither appropriate nor sufficient to generate widespread development".⁽²²⁾ The services, distribution, commercial, marketing, agro-processing and other functions that small towns and cities now perform may offer a far better base for stimulating⁽²³⁾ their growth and diversification than large scale manufacturing. Admittedly, these towns have strong and pervasive influence on the development of the region. But the sphere of influence is likely to be limited and the impact of urban centers on rural hinterlands declines with distance. Stohr's studies of diffusion influence in Latin America suggest that the spread effects from small and intermediate cities deteriorate rapidly.⁽²⁴⁾ Gilber in his studies of development impacts of the second largest city in Colombia found that they were the highest within a 25 K.M. based around the city and sharply declined for towns and human settlement in an around 50 k.m.⁽²⁵⁾ . The establishment of industrial "growth poles" is not capable of generating widespread economic growth in rural areas and equitably distributing the benefits of urbanisa-

tion in different regions of a developing country. In view of the fact that the spread effects decline with distance it seems necessary to ensure wider diffusion of innovation the stimulation of economic activities in rural areas and greater access for rural people to town based services and facilities ⁽²⁶⁾. Rondinelli and Ruddle ⁽²⁷⁾ delineated the five fold objectives of small town development policies thus : (a) to stimulate agricultural production and marketing of agricultural goods; (b) to support small scale agro-processing industries and to diversify the economic base of market centers; (c) to link town-based enterprises with rural supply areas and to marketing easily accessible to rural ~~populations~~ populations being at low densities or scattered widely over the landscape; (d) to provide water, basic housing, health and social services to increase the productivity of the labour force; (e) to provide off-farm ^a Job opportunities and urban amenities that will keep people in rural areas. In this context, the Chinese policy of strengthening the system of small towns and cities may be cited. The most important factor in the policy is that the urban centres are very closely linked to activities in their rural hinterlands and that their industrial functions are intended mainly to augment productivity of rural people. As a result, China has been able to distribute its population uniformly among the middle sized settlements by 1970s. In fact, "the largest cities will likely increase at the slowest rate, while the most rapid growth rate should occur in settlements with a population under 50,000 which

in many ways have closed ties to the modernization process in rural areas. (28)

To operationalize the small town and city development strategy it must be made clear that all the towns and cities cannot provide all the above-mentioned benefits. There is the need for careful analysis and planning to ensure that essential and strategic services and facilities that are provided in settlements to be developed as central places. There exists a methodology for analysing national and regional spatial systems to identify settlements that might be developed or upgraded. The U.S. Agency for International development through its "urban functions in Rural Development" projects in the Philippines, Bolivia, the Cameroons, Upper Volta and a few other countries has developed a methodology consisting of the following steps: (29)

a) Analysis of the demographic, social, economic and physical characteristics of the region under study to serve as data inventory for planning, monitoring and evaluating changes;

b) Analysis of the existing settlement structure which describes the elements of the settlement system, the functional complexity and centrality of settlements, the hierarchy of central places etc;

c) Description and analysis of the major socio-econo-

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mic organisational and physical linkages among settlements within the region;

d) Translation of the Spatial analysis into an investment plan that identifies the projects and programmes that will be needed to ameliorate major development problems, to strengthen and articulate the regional spatial structure and to integrate various levels of settlement within it;

e) Integration of projects identified through spatial and economic analysis into co-ordinated "investment packages" for different locations within the region^{on} and the combination of the investments into a priority-ranked and appropriately sequenced investment budget for the development of various towns and cities over a given period of time;

f) Creation of an evaluation system for monitoring the implementation of projects and programme.

e) Planning & Urban Development Policy : An Examination:

Any planned development in an under developed country like India must aim at building up and strengthening the agricultural and industrial base of the economy. A close look at the investment pattern would reveal that investments have so far been concentrated on agriculture and irrigation, mining, power,

communication, transport and manufacturing. As a result of these outlays there has been a marked change in size, function and pattern of human settlements. While the outlays in the first two sectors have vastly improved rural economy, power has been made available in greater bulk to both rural and urban areas, the outlays in the last two sectors have been instrumental for the growth of urban economy.

In 1962, with the launching of the community Development programme the emphasis was laid on Rural Development. The objective of the programme was to achieve the fullest development of available human and material resources on an area basis with public participation. Although agriculture remained the main focus of the programme it also included health and rural sanitation, social education, physical linkages as well as villages and small industries.

During the Fourth Plan, different area level programmes were initiated with a view to grappling with the problems of drought prone areas and backward areas including tribal and hilly areas. Allotment of house sites to the landless labourers in rural areas was introduced subsequently as a supplementary scheme. Under the Fifth plan, the National Programme of Minimum needs was initiated to meet the basic needs of the poorest sections of the society e.g. elementary education, health for cities, drinking water, all weather roads, home-sites for land-

less labourers and electricity. The village Housing Project Scheme provided for loan facility to the extent of 80 p.c. of the construction cost to the villagers. All these programmes should be viewed as an integrated approach to ameliorate the condition of villages and improve the quality of life in rural areas. The policy direction in industrial sector is in keeping with that of rural development. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956, which inter-alia, emphasized decentralisation of industries continues to be the basis of industrial development not withstanding with necessary changes industrial licensing policy following the recommendations of Monopolies Commission of 1965 and Industrial Licensing Policy Enquiry Committee 1969. By discouraging over-concentration of industries in a few areas specially in metropolises and by gradual deconcentration and relocation of these industries and location of the new industries the setting up of new towns and townships has been meticulously aimed at.

As an outcome of the policy the country witnessed a boom of small and intermediate towns. (30) Until the Third Five Year Plan not much thought was given to planned urban development. However, in the third plan a directive was given to control urban land value, physical planning of land use, defining tolerable minimum and maximum standards for housing and other services, augmented the municipal administrative capability for undertaking new development responsibilities. In the light of the policy direction the report of the Rural Urban Relationship Committee set up

by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Planning, recommended an administrative restructuring of local bodies and outlined the following recommendations for an integrated and balanced rural-urban development through the following measures : (a) new industries should be away from large and congested cities; (b) the concept of region-wise development should be accepted in the planning of big and heavy industries; (c) in community development projects or other planning whether district^{or} the rural and urban components of development should be knit into a composite plan consisting of the Schemes for strengthening economic interdependence and inter-linkages between towns and their rural hinterlands; within each rural area, the effort must be made to secure diversification of occupational pattern so as to lessen the excessive dependence on agriculture. (31)

The Committee on Urban Land Policy 1962 set up by the Union Ministry of Health, underlined the need for the adoption of an urban land policy to achieve an optimum social use of land. In the Fourth Plan, the Urban land policy consisted inter-alia of making land available in adequate quantity at the right time and at reasonable prices to both public authorities and individuals and preventing concentration of land ownership in a few private hands for safeguarding the interest of the poor and underprivileged sections of the urban society.

The Municipal Bodies, it has been rightly held, should be instrumental in urban development. To do so, the municipal bodies are to be strengthened. Union Ministry of Health and Family

Planning constituted a Committee on Municipal budgetary reforms 1974; its recommendations were related to allocation of adequate resources, reorganisation of the administrative ~~setup~~ set-up and provision of expertise and technical help to the municipal bodies. As the state governments are proverbially weak in the mobilisation of resources, they are averse to earmark the sources of fund for municipal bodies.

Although in the Third Plan, the states incurred expenditure for the preparation of the Master Plans for selected towns and metropolises they were never pursued in the Fourth Plan. The Fourth Plan, among other things, suggested for the enactment of comprehensive legislation for guiding the future course of urban development : Such legislation aims at : (a) Controlling urban development; (b) preventing unrestricted growth of metropolises; (c) having a regional approach in urban planning; and (d) enforcing urban land policy in regard to land acquisition and land valuation. The Fifth Plan, while taking stock of the situation, noted that despite growing awareness in the status of the problems of urban development, the states lagged behind in taking comprehensive action for the adoption and implementation of master plans chiefly because of organizational and financial bottlenecks at the local level. Broad objectives laid down in the Fifth Plan were : (a) to augment civic services in urban centres in order to make them fit for a reasonable level of living; (b) to deal with the problems of metropolitan cities on a more comprehensive and regio-

nal basis; (c) to develop the smaller towns and new urban centres to ~~ease~~ ease the pressure of urbanisation on the larger metropolitan centres; (d) to conceive and push through projects of national importance such as those relating to metropolitan areas or inter-state projects. ⁽³²⁾ In brief, the Fifth Plan emphasised the need for multi-faceted strategy to tackle the complex problems of urbanisation. National urbanisation Policy Resolution 1975 prepared by Town and Country Planning Organisation, Government of India, identified the following major areas: (a) Evolving a spatial pattern of economic development and location of hierarchy of human settlement consistent with the exploitation of natural and human resources of the region and ensuring functional linkages inter se;

(b) Securing optimum distribution of population between rural and urban settlements within each region and also among the towns of various sizes;

(c) Securing distribution of economic activities in small and medium size towns and in new growth centres in order to achieve maximum economic growth for the future;

(d) Controlling and where necessary arresting the further growth of metropolitan cities by dispersal of economic activities, legislative measures and establishment of new counter-magnets in the region;

(e) Providing minimum level of services for impro-

ving the quality of life in rural and urban areas and reducing gradually the difference between rural and urban living. (33)

The Resolution spelt out a number of strategies for the realisation of the above objectives. Admittedly, every urban centre does perform several functions for a size of population threshold. Such centres need be hierarchically arranged along with interlinkages. The functions of each size class cities and towns are to be identified and the capacity of these cities and towns has to be augmented by removing the weakness of infrastructures needed for stimulating growth.

Within the broad framework the urban centres, have been sought to be classified in the following manner:

- a) Metropolitan cities with population of 1 million and above;
- b) Class I cities with a population of 100000 to 1 million;
- c) Medium size towns with a population of 50,000 to 100000;
- d) Small towns with a population of 5000 to 50,000.

After classifying the urban centres as above, the Policy Resolution provided action programmes for guiding the pattern of urban growth along the desirable lines. In the first place, the fast expanding metropolitan cities need proper planning

to guard against unregulated urban growth in future. Existence of strong economic infrastructure in these cities attract new industries. By enunciation of proper industrial location policy and putting disincentives for new industries to come up the situation can be brought under control. The concept of region-wise planning frame has been emphasised in the Policy Resolution. Within this region, growth foci have to be identified, planned and developed so that these centres are capable of absorbing much of population load of the metropolis. A group of intermediate cities which offer the opportunity for the establishment of large and medium industries within proper plan frames should be developed as counter-magnets to the metropolitan and big cities. The medium towns can be developed as growth centres where agro-based industries and small scale industries can be located to cater to various farm and non-farm needs of the rural population. The small towns at the bottom of the hierarchy should grow as rural service centres. These centers should provide inputs for agricultural production in the surrounding areas. Thus, the Policy Resolution suggested for developing hierarchy of human settlements based on population and infrastructural facilities, not only for even distribution of urban population but also for the sake of establishing linkages with their respective hinterland areas.

d) Urban Development Policy in the States : West Bengal Experience

Few more words in regard to urbanisation policy in the states would be in order here. To State that urbanization

policy is yet to take a final shape is not an over-statement. The main thrust in this respect has been on area development ranging from regional development (Bihar) and development of growth centres (Andhra Pradesh) to functional schemes of the planned urban development (Gujarat and Maharashtra etc.) The main objective of the area approach is "to avoid serious pitfalls and limitations of the Traditional Schematic approach to administration at the block and district levels and to replace it with a well organised and integrated administrative programme for the development of an area, through active participation of and collaboration between official and non-official and voluntary agencies and the citizen." ⁽²⁴⁾ This is a significant development in the field of decentralised pattern of development. In fact, for the growth of hinterland areas a few states have undertaken rural development programme through comprehensive area development (in West Bengal), the scheme of model villages (in Haryana), intensive village development scheme (in Punjab) and development of mandi towns (in Bihar). In Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, where 43 p.c. of the total area is covered by the tribals, Tribal Area Development Plan (TADP) and sub-plan for tribal area exist respectively. But by and large, small and medium towns throughout the country have been neglected, particularly, in respect of developing growth potentialities and forging interlinkages with their rural hinterlands.

In West Bengal the Government set up a Committee on West Bengal Urban Development Strategy in July 1980 with the follow-

(35)

ing terms of reference;

a) To suggest means to co-ordinate activities of different agencies and government departments involved in the work of urban development in the State;

b) Formulation of a strategy for urban development in West Bengal taking into account potential population growth centres;

c) To suggest the criteria for allocating resources between the different urban areas including Calcutta;

d) To suggest measures for setting up a decentralized system for urban development in the State;

e) To review the provision of the West Bengal town and country planning Act in so far as they impinge on the problems of integrated urban development.

(36)

The Committee prepared an outline of urban policy in 1982. It noted, "when urban development work was taken up in West Bengal in a significant way, some years ago, the outlook was that the problems of Calcutta and its environs, which is the hub of economic and commercial activities in the state, should be tackled first. But the problems as a result of long years of neglect were found to be so many that efforts for urban development got begged in Calcutta only with no satisfactory

solution in sight. In the meantime, very little attention could be paid to other towns. Our experience now shows that we must get out of this one-sided approach and pay attention to other urban areas also. These towns had been even more neglected and fairness demands that their minimum need should be attended to. But more importantly, improvement of Calcutta alone will be self defeating, if other towns fail to hold back population who want urban facilities. Therefore, formulation of a revised urban policy is necessary which will spell out in broad terms an approach to a balanced urban growth even with limited resources." (37) Because of resource constraints a clear policy has to be laid down as to how urban development fund of the West Bengal Government should be spread between different sizes of towns including Calcutta. So far, the per capita development expenditure in Calcutta had been disproportionately high as compared with expenditure for other towns. In the following table the per capita annual planned outlay^{for} urban centres including Calcutta has been presented.

Table - I

Annual per capita planned outlay for Calcutta and other local bodies in West Bengal. (38)

(Figures in rupees)

Sl. No.	Local Body	Years				
		1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81
1.	Calcutta	61.64	47.13	50.00	57.71	59.53
2.	Other CMDA Local Bodies.	19.88	19.02	13.24	25.16	30.40
3.	Non-CMDA Local Bodies	0.87	0.87	6.56	9.32	13.84

The table reveals that in 1976-77 per capita planned expenditure in Calcutta - Howrah area was Rs. 61.54 while that for other CMDA Local Bodies was Rs. 19.88 and the corresponding figure for the remaining non CMDA Local Bodies was only Rs. 0.87. As a result of more attention being paid to other local bodies, the per capita planned expenditure became Rs. 54.53, Rs. 30.40 and 19.84 respectively for Calcutta, other CMDA Local Bodies, and Non-CMDA Local Bodies. There should be sustained effort towards the attainment of balance in urban development by gradual narrowing of gap in the allocation of per capita expenditure between Calcutta and other local bodies.

The pressure of urban population on Calcutta would never be eased unless other towns are sufficiently developed to hold back. The policy bias to one city of the State i.e. Calcutta must be overhauled so as to ensure socio-economic development of other local bodies. The over-all picture is that unless other population growth centres are adequately developed the problems of Calcutta would not be satisfactorily dealt with (39). However, there are ~~many~~ various commitments in regard to development schemes for Calcutta which cannot be halted abruptly. The general policy is to slow down as far as possible the rate of growth of expenditure in Calcutta and step up expenditure for other towns. By modifying the practice of concentration in Calcutta and Howrah the CMDA Fund should be adequately spread over 36 (Thirtysix) municipalities under CMDA. As a result

of this shift the municipalities outside the CMD area would receive larger share of State fund. Population growth centres which are not yet municipalities, such as, block headquarters are important links between rural and urban activities and adequate facilities should also be developed in these centres to check population flow towards large towns.

In urban development schemes in a given town, there is the need for giving priority to those schemes which can improve the backward areas. Although certain general schemes on drainage, conservancy etc. embracing nearly the entire town may be necessary, the problems of drinking water, drainage, sanitation and roads are most acute in the areas inhabited by the poor and attention should be given first to these areas. Building of large market halls, stadiums or similar other showpieces should have low priority. Schemes of building market ~~centres~~ centres for agricultural and cottage industry produce, centres providing facilities for setting up cottage and small-scale units, repairing shops of various types and the like will stimulate new employment.

The urban policy as stated above is interalia closely inter-linked with urbanisation policy as well. In the past, investible resources for urban development used to be largely gravitated into Calcutta's development thus forcing the other towns to starve for development fund. This has resulted in the ceaseless migration of population in the direction of Calcutta

which in its wake brought virtually insoluble problems in the field of its urban basic services like, road, transport, housing, conservancy, drainage, water supply and sanitation⁽⁴⁰⁾. By distributing the fund among various municipal boards for the creation and maintenance of urban basic services, the attempt is being made to distribute urban population in different parts of the state. This strategy to set up a system of small and intermediate towns as countermagnets to Calcutta is intended to relax its population pressure. To remove the dichotomy between rural and urban sectors the need for interlinking the urban outgrowth⁽⁴¹⁾ with urban centres has been rightly emphasised as an important component of the urban policy. The growth centre strategy is concerned with the identification of a series of service and higher level centres to ensure provision of minimum needs as also infra-structure for development in a planned manner.

The contribution of CADG (Comprehensive Area Development Corporation) towards the growth of such centres can hardly be gain said. The West Bengal Comprehensive Area Development Corporation established in 1974 advocates that "a thorough overhaul of the existing inequitable and antiproduktive socio-economic structure is an essential condition for the full realisation of the technologically possible maximum rate of growth of production. In operational terms it will mean, on the one hand, blocking the channels of such anti-productive investments as usury, rack renting the speculative trade and on the other, providing the wherewithals

for modernisation, to all the peasants, including particularly the poorer peasants, in a given area and the guarantee of a far higher wage for the agricultural labour." ⁽⁴²⁾ The type of modernisation of agriculture visualised will need for its own success a rapid development of industry and urbanisation. One of the most essential pre-conditions for the latter is the total transformation of the existing urban economic base which, in its turn, will require modernised agricultural base." ⁽⁴³⁾ "This, agricultural modernisation, rapid industrialisation and urbanisation and provision of essential social, economic and physical infrastructure are all integral parts of the required total development of our country." ⁽⁴⁴⁾ Since 1978, the CADDC has been brought to sharper focus by redefining its objectives. For this, integrated approach, co-ordination and enlargement of the scope of experimentation with new crops practices technologies and Institutions had been suggested as new areas of emphasis. Whereas the tendency among the government departments is to treat the problems coming under their jurisdiction in isolation, ^AWBCDC had the potential of seeing the full range of possibilities in diversifying the rural economy and identifying the linkages which exist between various activities. ⁽⁴⁴⁾ At the project level, the co-operation provides "an opportunity for co-ordinated work among all the governmental, Panchayat and other bodies with the project Advisory Board (P.A.B.) at its nucleus". ⁽⁴⁵⁾ The flexibility of the decision-making process and the absence of rigid, time wasting, hierarchi-

and bureaucratic rules would, it was thought, make it possible for this organisation to adopt unorthodox views and to undertake risks of failure involved in experiments. (46)

e) Integrated development of small and medium towns:-

There is no denying that "the solutions to the problems of metropolitan cities lie in small and medium towns and those of all towns and cities in the villages. Small and medium towns possess a great potential both for relieving much of the burden upon large cities and for functioning as growth centres for surrounding villages. These towns and villages need to be revitalised through increased employment opportunities, better environmental and social services and appropriate housing" (47) and planning with regional perspectives. Both at national and international levels attempts are being made to have an integrated approach to development with a focus on 'man' and his 'habitation' by providing basic minimum needs which are "pre-condition both for preserving the dignity of man and for providing a basis for his development" (48). At the crucial juncture of ^{the} 20th century, it felt that economic development is not necessarily accompanied by social development. To many, this was the reason why the First U.N. Development ^D decade failed. As a result, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations adopted a resolution in May 1970 on 'integrated' approach to development as a total societal

process. This received endorsement by the General Assembly in Dec. 1970. The philosophy of development was shifted from quantitative economic growth to qualitative development. Such philosophy was concretised in the United Nations World Conference on Human Environment at Stockholm (1972) which was addressed by Late Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi who made perceptive observation on "environment" and "social justice" as two important dimensions of development strategy. Despite the fact that the values of 'environment' and 'Social Justice' are embedded in the Directive Principles of State Policy in our constitution they received adequate weightage in the formulation of plan politics and programmes under 5th and 6th plan. (49)

Admittedly, there is the need for a set of complementary strategies -- increasing employment, meeting basic need, reducing inequalities, raising the productivity of the poor. To attain this, economic inputs are to be reinforced by social inputs like education, nutrition, health, water supply and sanitation. The contribution of these key sectors has been recognised as important components of an overall development policy. "Integrated" approach to development of small and medium towns seeks to bring about a balance between 'agriculture' and 'industry' on the one hand, and 'Urban' and 'Rural' development on the other.

The main thrust in the urbanisation policy in the Sixth Plan (1978-83) has been to solve the problems of urban en-

environment by encouraging the growth of small and medium towns and slow^{ing} down^w, if possible to reverse^{ing} the rate of growth of metropolitan cities; these towns are to act as the link of rural development strategy and through them must flow all the inputs required to develop the village economy and implement the hard core of the rural conservation and environmental care programme. (50) To achieve this objective greater emphasis on the provision of infra-structural and other facilities in the small and medium towns has been given so that they can serve as growth and service centres for the rural hinterland. That is why in the Sixth plan "increased investments are proposed in these towns in housing, water supply and tele communication facilities. Likewise, facilities for education, medical care and recreation will need to be augmented." (51)

In other words, "integrated development requires new approaches in the methods of urban development including changes in the current status and methodology of urban planning and new modes of popular participation, including changes in the power structure that controls decision making". (52) In any social set up, the distinction is sought to be made between the mechanics of living and art of living (53). The mechanics of living concerns the condition of human and material life. The art of living relates to art of spiritual life, form of worship dance and song but all these concepts of life, spiritual, cultural and artistic cannot go in vacuum. (54) This presupposes

the provision and sustenance of the essential conditions of life.

Integrated development programme is an action oriented programme, not based on ratio between resources and results. To make the programme more effective, the integration of shelter and services and infrastructure seems essential in terms of the following : (a) a single package with a view to minimising potential contradictions and trade offs within and among multiple objectives and using the achievement of each objective to further the cause of others; (b) all the objectives must be given appropriate priority and pursued simultaneously; and finally (c) these objectives must be used as the criteria for development performance and evaluation of results. Such a strategy requires an element of dynamism by the most efficient use of resources and additional inputs. This can be done by using management techniques, knowledge and wisdom including experience in action-research, quite different from experience in desk research. (55) In a participatory democracy, the most important task is to create a political environment propitious for policy administration and decision-making process. The draft Sixth Plan (1978-83) provided for IDSMF Scheme keeping in view the objectives and strategy for development as laid down beforehand. This centrally sponsored scheme covered small and medium towns with a population of 1 lakh and below, on the basis of 1971 census. The 'Guidelines' issued for the purpose should be discussed here in short. While selec-

ting the towns for the purpose preference should be given to District Headquarters towns, sub-division towns, mudi towns, and other growth centers. Since it is not possible to cover all the towns conforming to the population criteria during this plan period, the selection of the town has to be done carefully with reference to: (a) the rate of growth of population; (b) the growth of the district and the region; and (c) the investment taking place in the hinterland. Another factor would be the linkage of employment generation with urban development and the capacity of the institutions responsible for urban development.

IDSMT scheme provides for the components for which the central assistance would be available on matching basis and also those components for which funds would be met from the provisions in the state plans in the following manner:

A) Components eligible for Central assistance on matching basis.

I. Land acquisition and development. Residential schemes will include sites and services with or without core housing;

II. Traffic and transformation to subserve the shelter and employment projects will include construction of roads and improvements/upgradation of existing road but will not include purchase of motor vehicles;

III. Development of mandis/markets, provision of industrial estates, provision of other service and processing facilities for the benefit of agricultural and rural development in the hinterland.

B). Components for which funds are to be found from the State Plans but which must form part of the Integrated Scheme.

IV. Slum improvement/upgradation, urban renewal and

V. Low cost schemes of water supply, Sewerage, drainage and sanitation;

VI. Provision of medical facilities/health care.

VII. Parks and playgrounds.

VIII. Assistance for the purpose of making modifications, wherever necessary, in city master plans to permit mixed land use.

In view of resource constraints in each of the components there should be intensive effort to maximise coverage by lowering the standards -- standard should be related to the size of urban settlement, nature of the services provided and population trend. With the improvement of resource position and paying capacity of the town-dwellers, the services should be incrementally built up. Illustrations highlighting the above may be stated thus:

a) Water supply, where the existing norm of 40-60 gallons per head per day may be brought down to 15-20 gallons.

b) Health services, where expensive plans should give way to simple preventive medicine and environmentally hygiene programmes.

c) Housing, where the bulk of the money should go into the site and services projects for the predominantly lower income categories.

In preparation of the plan, the State Government should identify the agency/agencies and implement the programme. The task of co-ordination should be left to the department/departments of the state Government or State level agencies like the state town planning departments, Housing Board, Slum improvement Board, & P. W. D. The local bodies should be encouraged and assisted to participate in the preparation and implementation of the integrated programme. Institutional arrangement for project formulation, execution and monitoring should be well defined and established so that the funds are properly utilised and a significant impact on the living and Physical conditions of the selected towns. An effective machinery for co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of the programme should be set up by the State Govt. at the town level under the District collector and at the State level preferably under the Chief Secretary or Development

Commissioner. Arrangement must also be made by the State Govt. to ensure proper maintenance of the infrastructure and other facilities created. Adequate provision in the budget for the agency responsible for maintenance will have to be made annually.

Central assistance in the form of loan amounting to 50 p.c. of the cost of the projects in suitable instalments for the items already mentioned provided matching assistance is made by the state government and/or implementing agency. Provision must be made for financing the projects including the ~~center~~ centre's share for a programme in the budgets of the state and the implementing agency. The progress report in financial and physical terms containing a report on the targets and achievements for each component along with further central assistance required should be submitted to the Centre. Next instalment will be released ~~when~~^{on} a receipt of the certificate from the State Government indicating the utilisation of the previous instalment in a proforma. The central assistance will constitute a loan component of the project fund for which the state government will be responsible for repayment of the principal and interest @ 5.5 p.c. subject to a rebate of $\frac{1}{2}\%$ for timely repayment of principal and interest. It would be repayable in 25 yrs. including a moratorium of five years. The penultimate instalment for a particular project will be released only on receipt of utilisation certificate issued by the Accountant General for the completed accounts.

relating to the previous financial year.

It was further stipulated that the Central assistance will be available to the State Government if it prepares an integrated plan for the development of town preferably based on a long term Master Plan/Development Plan. The State Government may consider the passing of a comprehensive town and country planning act for preparation and statutory approval of the Master plan and land use control. The financial assistance is conditional upon the ability of the agencies to maintain the assets and facilities created and their ability to repay the loans. The IDSMT scheme emphasises the need for equipping the staff employed in the implementing agencies and the municipalities with adequate training and expertise so as to ensure proper formulation, execution and monitoring of the scheme. Before the sanctioning of the scheme, the state Government should undertake to get the concerned planning and executing staff of the local bodies in the Regional Centre of training in municipal administration under the Ministry or in any other suitable Training organisation. The state government should pursue an urban land policy for the mopping up of unearned income accruing to private parties as a result of the development programmes and generally to tap the resource potential of valuable urban land. The question of central assistance is intended only to support and strengthen the resources of the implementing agencies and those provided by the State Government. Details relating to the preparation of the ~~plan~~

project report should have been clearly provided in the 'guidelines'.

F) Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns projects in West Bengal ; its Status.

To write a status report on IDSMT in West Bengal is relevant here. UDSC (Urban Development Strategy Committee) of the Government of West Bengal identified 20 (twenty) towns in the state under IDSMT programme. The outlay for each of these towns is Rs. 1 crore where the central assistance constitutes to the maximum of Rs. 40 lakhs. In pursuance of the Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Works & Housing, Government of India (MOWH, GOI) these towns were selected primarily on population basis coupled with interlinkages with their respective hinterlands. All the towns had population less than 1 lakh as per 1971 census. In the first phase, the Programme covered Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Cooch Behar, Balurghat, English Bazar, Suri, Krishnanagar, Bashirhat, Midnapur, Kharagpur, Bankura, Bishnupur, Purulia, Katwa, Trirakeswar, Bishanpur, Ranaghat, Raiganj, Jalpaiguri and Siliguri. In the next phase five (5) more towns viz. Bolpur, Contai, Raniganj, Habra and Arambagh have been included under the IDSMT Programme.

Compared to other states IDSMT programme started very late as a number of hurdles had to be overcome. (56) . The planning exercise was hurriedly done by various agencies like

Municipal Engineering Directorate, of LGUD, Town and Country Planning Organisation, HUDCO. The entire exercise was completed in a period between two months and four months. (57) Admittedly, there was the urgency for moving fast. But to scotch the stages of planning is to frustrate the purposes of planning from below which remains the main plank of urban development strategy now. The Government of India in its guidelines provided that such integrated development of towns should form part of comprehensive development plan. But none of these towns had either comprehensive or master plan when the IDSMT projects were drawn up. "In the absence of any of these planning exercises schemes were more or less selected on adhoc basis as per the need of the local body and all these selected projects received approval of the District level committee headed by Sabhadipati of Zilla Parishad." (58)

A synopsis on the IDSMT towns in West Bengal showing population size and special status may be provided in the following table :

Table - 2

Town	District	Population (in thousand)		Density per Sq. Km.	Decoral change Rate of increase		Special Status.
		1961	1971		1971	1981	
1. Cooch Behar	Cooch Behar	42	54	7478	28.06	14.81	Dt. Hq.
2. Jalpaiguri	Jalpaiguri	49	53	6157	13.17	10.74	Dt. Hq.
3. Darjeeling	Darjeeling	41	43	5373	5.47	32.62	Dt. Hq.
4. Kalimpong	Darjeeling	25	23	3381	6.67	22.03	Sub-DIVL Hq.
5. Siliguri	Darjeeling	65	97	9903	48.30	57.80	--do--
6. Balurghat	West Dinajpur	27	67	16483	148.48	56.72	Dt. Hq.
7. Raiganj	West Dinajpur	32	43	5639	33.76	39.25	Sub-DIVL. Hq.
8. English Bazar	Malda	46	61	17063	33.63	23.82	Dt. Hq.
9. Suri	Birbhum	23	30	4325	31.82	35.93	Dt. Hq.
10. Krishnagar	Nadia	70	86	6202	21.98	14.13	Dt. Hq.
11. Ranaghat	Naiida	35	48	1313	35.58	20.83	Sub-DIVL. Hq.
12. Basirhat	24-Parganas	54	64	3680	18.30	26.61	--do--
13. Midnapur	Midnapur	59	71	8301	19.81	21.08	Dt. Hq.

Contd.....

Town	District	Population (in thousand)		Density per Sq. Km.	Decadal change Rate of increase		Special Status.
		1961	1971		1971	1981	
14. Khareggur	Midnapur	62	62	1654	6.09	141.94	One of the biggest Rly Jn.
15. Bankura	Bankura	63	79	5240	25.94	19.94	Dt. Hq.
16. Bishnupur	Bankura	31	38	2268	23.18	24.51	Sub-Divl.Hq
17. Purulia	Purulia	48	58	5912	19.89	27.49	Dt. Hq.
18. Katva	Burdwan	21	29	6371	39.82	13.79	Sub-Divl.Hq.
19. Tarakeswar	Hooghly	8	12	4863	40.23	31.79	Temple Town
20. Berhampur	Murshidabad	62	72	5744	16.51	28.08	Dt. Hq.

Source: Hand Book on Municipal Administration, ILGUS, Govt. of West Bengal, March 1986.

The table provides a population profile as well as the special status of the twenty towns selected under IDSMT programme. It would reveal also that out of 20 (twenty) towns while 11 (eleven) are District Headquarters, 7 (seven) are sub-divisional headquarters, 1 (one) is the largest Railway (Rly) Junction with Rly workshop and the remaining town is the temple town whose importance is determined by the influx of innumerable devotees. By and large these towns have agrarian economy with their respective hinterlands. Nevertheless special features of some towns may be briefly mentioned thus : Darjeeling & Kalimpong being a tourist spots attract large tourists every year and their economy is contingent upon the flow of tourists. Kharagpur is connected with the rest of the country through Rly. network and therefore, its growth is interlinked with the expansion of railway establishments. The growth of the temple town Tarsakeswar is largely determined by the influx of the devotees. The commercial importance of Siliguri lies in the fact that it is an entrepot to the Himalayan region and Assam and Southern part of West Bengal. Excepting Balurghat it is the fastest growing town among IDSMT towns of West Bengal in terms of decadal change of population size and density of population. Districtwise breakup of IDSMT towns runs thus: Cooch Behar-1 (one), Jalpaiguri-1(one), Darjeeling -3(three), West Dinajpur-2(two), Malda-1(one), Birbhum-1(one), Nadia-2(two), North 24 Paraganas-1(one), Midnapur-2(two), Bankura-2(two), Purulia-1(one), Burdwan-1(one), Hooghly-1(one), Murshidabad-1(one).

It would not be out of place to mention that in selection of towns for IDSMT scheme Urban Population and decennial growth rate of urban population in the districts have not been strictly adhered to and to this extent selection process is arbitrary.

Further, it may be argued that out of seventeen districts, six districts including Calcutta come within the jurisdiction of CMDA and the rest eleven are non-CMDA districts which include Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, West Dinajpur, Malda, Birbhum, Nadia, Midnapur, Bankura, Purulia and Burdwan. Notwithstanding with overlapping of IUDP and IDSMT Schemes, by and large, IUDP Schemes cover municipal towns under CMDA which include Calcutta, Howrah, Hooghly, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas and Nadia; non-CMDA municipalities come primarily under the scope of IDSMT Scheme.

Attempt may be made to study rural and urban population size along with their decadal increase in different districts of the state of West Bengal in order to highlight the level of urbanisation. In reality, not only the urban population but also rural population should be carefully noted in order to identify the urban centres having interlinkages with their respective rural hinterlands. In the tables below relevant figures have been placed accordingly.

Table - 3

Districts arranged in descending order of percentage of Urban population in total population (1981) with corresponding percentages of Urban population in 1971 and 1981 and total population in 1981.

District	Total Population	Urban population	Percentage of urban to total population.	
	1981 (in thousand)	1981 (in thousand)	1971	1981
1. Calcutta	3305	3305	100.00	100.00
2. Hoora	2967	1339	41.9	45.1
3. 24 Parganas	10739	4169	35.2	38.8
4. Burdwan	4835	1421	22.7	29.4
5. Hooghly	3557	1051	26.4	29.4
6. Darjeeling	1024	282	23.0	27.5
7. Nadia	2964	640	18.7	21.5
8. Jalpaiguri	2215	311	9.6	14.1
9. West Dinajpur	2405	269	9.3	11.2
10. Murshidabad	3698	346	8.4	9.3
11. Purulia	1854	167	8.2	9.0
12. Midnapur	6743	573	7.6	8.5
13. Birbhum	2096	174	7.0	8.3
14. Bankura	2375	181	7.4	7.6
15. Cooch Behar	1772	122	6.8	6.9
16. Malda	2032	97	4.2	4.7

Source: Hand Book on Municipal Administration I.L.G.U.S. Govt. of West Bengal March, 1986 p. 57.

Table -4

District arranged in descending order of decadal growth rate of urban population with corresponding growth rates of rural population and urban population in 1981.

District.	Total population (in Thousand)		Decennial growth rate 1971-81 (in percentage)		
	1971	1981	Total	Rural	Urban
1. Jalpaiguri	1756	2216	+ 26.14	+ 19.86	+ 34.94
2. Burdwan	3937	4835	+ 22.81	+ 11.87	+ 59.83
3. Darjeeling	795	1025	+ 28.81	+ 20.70	+ 56.56
4. West Dinajpur	1862	2405	+ 29.19	+ 26.63	+ 54.04
5. Nadia	2221	2964	+ 33.45	+ 29.06	+ 52.65
6. Malda	1610	2032	+ 26.21	+ 25.45	+ 42.88
7. 24 Parganas	8459	10739	+ 26.95	+ 19.62	+ 40.48
8. Birbhum	1777	2096	+ 17.95	+ 16.30	+ 39.88
9. Murshidabad	2936	3698	+ 25.95	+ 24.77	+ 38.62
10. Hooghly	2878	3557	+ 23.59	+ 18.43	+ 37.94
11. Midnapur	5525	6743	+ 22.05	+ 20.84	+ 36.62

Contd.....

Contd.....Table -4

District	Total population (in thousand)		Decennial growth rate (1971-81 (in percentage))		
	1971	1981	Total	Rural	Urban
12. Howrah	2425	2967	+ 22.35	+ 15.41	+ 31.95
13. Cooh Behar	1415	1772	+ 25.23	+ 25.18	+ 26.58
14. Purulia	1602	1854	+ 15.73	+ 14.83	+ 26.09
15. Bankura	2032	2375	+ 16.88	+ 16.69	+ 19.40
16. Calcutta	3161	3305	+ 4.56	+ 10.00	+ 4.56

Source: Op.cit., p. 59.

Table -5

A brief survey of the population profile etc. of districts should follow an overview of the basic urban services at present available in the IDSMI towns of West Bengal to highlight the status of municipal services in West Bengal.

Town	Area	Popula- tion (in thou- sand)	Density	Length of Pucca road (Km)	No. of ser- vice drives to to- tal hol- dings (f)	Markets		Piped water (IPCD)	Dispen- sary Hospi- tals.	Marketing house
						Mini	Mon- Mini.			
1. Coxh Behar	8.29	64	7,720	63	52	2	4	4	-	-
2. Jalpaiguri	10.27	62	6,57	63	80	2	1	15	15	-
3. Darjeeling	10.57	57	5,393	84	3	2	-	107	2	-
4. Kallimpong	8.68	29	3,341	17	24	1	-	81	-	-
5. Siliguri	15.55	154	9,903	116	41	1	1	-	-	-
6. Balurghat	6.37	106	16,641	45	59	2	2	-	-	-
7. Raiganj	10.64	60	5,639	65	66	-	5	-	-	-
8. English Bazar	4.63	79	17,063	78	60	4	1	47	-	-
9. Suri	9.48	41	4,325	31	16	1	-	32	-	-
10. Krishnagar	15.80	98	6,202	74	16	-	6	49	-	-
11. Ranaghat	7.72	55	7,124	51	28	1	3	48	-	1

Contd.....

Contd.....Table -5

Town	Area	Popula- tion (in thou- sand).	Density	Length of Pucca road (Km)	No. of ser- vice privies to to- tal hol- dings (#)	Markets		Piped water (IPCD)	Dispen- sary Hospi- tals.	Marketing house.
						Mini	Non- Mini			
12. Bashirhat	22.02	81	3680	89	5	1	2	-	2	-
13. Midnapur	10.36	86	8301	130	5	1	2	-	2	-
14. Kharagpur	90.65	153	1688	109	52	-	-	64	-	-
15. Bankura	18.13	95	5240	66	24	3	-	60	-	-
16. Bishnupur	20.72	47	2268	44	11	1	6	-	1	-
17. Purulia	13.13	74	5312	41	23	5	-	-	1	-
18. Katwa	5.18	36	6950	19	23	-	3	38	1	-
19. Tarakeswar	3.29	16	4863	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
20. Berhampur	16.19	93	5744	37	39	-	-	14	-	-

* NA = Not available

Source: Ibid., 1986.

Table -6

After making a brief survey of the status of municipal services in IDSMI towns, it is worthy while for having a glimpse over sectoral allocations in IDSMI projects. In the table below allocations in broad sectors have been shown.

Towns	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Road/Bridge/ street lighting.	Industrial/ Commercial complex & markets.	Land Area develop- ment.	Development of Residen- tial plot.	Rest house/ Dorme- tory.	Buster- minus/ Taxi Stand.	Township	Total
1. Cooh Behar	-	-	41.00	29.00	10.00	-	-	-	80.00
2. Darjeeling	-	-	100.05	-	-	-	24.22	-	108.05
3. Kalimpong	46.51	46.51	88.82	-	-	-	24.31	-	99.64
4. Belurghat	10.00	10.00	50.00	24.00	-	-	12.00	-	86.00
5. English Bazar	20.00	20.00	35.00	-	5.00	-	22.00	-	85.80
6. Suri	14.85	14.85	64.28	1.18	-	-	-	-	80.31
7. Krishnagar	22.18	22.18	24.62	-	-	7.54	27.68	-	83.01
8. Beshirhat	12.16	12.16	28.48	41.42	-	-	-	-	82.06
9. Midnapur	-	-	64.00	-	16.00	-	-	-	80.00
10. Kharagpur	30.33	30.33	41.45	-	-	-	-	20.91	92.69
11. Bunkure	57.32	57.32	31.35	-	-	-	-	-	88.67
12. Bichoupur	-	-	59.26	-	9.63	8.08	7.95	-	84.92

Contd.....

Contd.....Table.-6

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13. Purulia	15.30	54.70	-	9.40	-	-	-	80.00
14. Katwa	16.00	25.00	12.00	24.00	-	23.00	-	100.00
15. Tarakeswar	9.56	40.03	-	-	13.54	32.93	-	96.06
16. Berhampur	-	40.70	34.50	4.80	-	-	-	80.00
17. Ranaghat	12.31	29.32	-	44.03	-	24.74	-	110.40
18. Raiganj	4.99	44.16	18.00	-	-	24.15	-	91.10
19. Jalpaiguri	-	50.09	-	-	-	24.15	-	97.46
20. Silliguri	6.00	47.44	-	5.36	-	42.10	-	100.90

Source : Ibid.

The above table reveals the following: Excepting Darjeeling, Katwa & Siliguri no other towns have plan outlay amounting to Rs. 1 crore being the maximum outlay for an IDSMT town; they are closely followed by the five others having outlay in the range of Rs. 98 lakhs to Rs. 90 lakhs and the rest have the outlay between Rs. 80 lakh and Rs. 90 lakhs taking into consideration the sharing of the Union Government, State Government and the Municipal authority on the basis of 40:40:20. This reflects the state of municipal finance in West Bengal.

A reference of the revenue and income of municipal bodies would not be out of place to mention here. They consist of two broad groups : (a) Internal revenue (b) external revenue or transfer. Internal revenue is derived out of the sources delegated to the municipal bodies by the State government through the Acts governing the municipal bodies which are exploited by the former within the limits of the powers conferred on them by statutes and notifications. External revenue or transfer means transfer of fund from the state in the form of grants or assignments. The two groups together constitute total Revenue Income (T.R.) of the municipal bodies of the state. "On an average more than 40 p.c. of T.R. came from revenue transfers from the State to the municipal bodies in 1978-79. The municipal bodies other than the Calcutta Corporation had higher relative dependence on transfers. In 1975-76, about one-third of Calcutta Corpora-

ration's I.R. was accounted for by transfers, which increased to 36 p.c. by 1973-79. On the otherhand, 40 p.c. of the T.R. of other municipal bodies consisted of transfers in 1975-76 which steadily went upto around 50 p.c. in 1977-78. Thus, for every rupee spent by Calcutta Corporation, 30 paise comes out of state transfer and the other municipalities can meet only a half of their revenue commitments out of their own resources." (59) Regrettably, even with faster rate of State transfer T.R. of the municipal bodies was much less than the municipal revenues in other states. For example in 1978-79 the T.R. of Bombay municipal corporation was about Rs. 110.40 crores as compared to Rs. 25.78 crores of the Calcutta Corporation. (60) The extent of dependence of external inflows of the municipal bodies other than the Calcutta Corporation, Pertains to only average situation; the financial plight of the majority of them is much worse. As many as 10 to 11 p.c. of the municipal bodies excluding Calcutta Corporation and the town Committee, had internal revenue income below 30 p.c. of T.R. 64 p.c. of the municipal bodies had internal revenue below 10 p.c. of T.R. and only 30 municipalities or 36 p.c. had internal revenue percentage above 50 p.c. of T.R. Viewing from another angle, 64 p.c. of the municipal bodies depended on State transfers ranging between 50 and 80 percent and more of their total revenue commitments and 36 p.c. depended on state transfers of the order of less than 50 p.c. (61)

In the light of this dismal state of municipal finance

the municipal bodies, cannot have bigger outlay for IDSMT. In fact, in case of smaller municipalities (e.g. Purulia, Katwa) even the municipal share to the extent of 20 p.c. of the total outlay has been borne by the State. It is intended to discuss the financing of IDSMT elsewhere. Hence, it would suffice here to mention that with low financial capacity, municipal bodies can hardly plough back enough capital for development purposes. One of the objectives of IDSMT is to strengthen the municipal bodies economically through investments in income generating sectors and this would be examined later.

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