

PREFACE

Today it has been observed that in all human societies the process of urbanization is present as a natural phenomenon. The process of urbanization is gaining more and more attention of different disciplines, particularly belonging to social science. However, the historian and sociologist have given much more attention to the urban effects by the industrial revolution than the environmental effects of urbanization. Therefore, the urbanization and its influence on environmental factors has become an interesting area to the Geographers in the present trend of research and sustainable development which was largely ignored few decades back.

Urbanization whether a process or a system, is basically a movement of people from lower order settlement to higher order settlements. At a given time urbanization has been an inevitable phenomenon. But like many other natural process here also an unplanned urbanization may lead to harm instead of good in human life. Thus the general preference is for a continuous process of planning. During the Second World War and immediately after that the devastation of cities in Europe and elsewhere posed a new challenge to the students of urban problems. Along with the planners, engineers, sociologists, economist, administrators and the geographers had to take important and positive role for judging and evaluation the relation between man and environment.

Cooch Behar was an independent kingdom before merging up with India. The princely state was transformed in the Cooch Behar district, with Cooch Behar town as its headquarters. Cooch Behar town is also the largest town in the district. The municipal activities of this town are directed by the Cooch Behar town, which was established in 1946.

The study on the problems of urbanization in Cooch Behar town makes a part of the study in urban geography. The study seek to answer some basic questions to explain the existing geographical position, growth and factors of evolution, morphology, environmental and related problems and makes some suggestions for sustainable urbanization from a geographical point of view. To fulfil these answers the present study has been organized in to the seven chapters.

Chapter one starts with the introduction of the study devoted by the meaning and definitions of urbanization and enters into the theoretical discussions as well as the

study area and finally deals with the objectives, methodologies, hypotheses with review of literatures and lastly the design of the thesis.

Chapter two deals with relief, drainage, vegetation and climatic conditions in Cooch Behar town and population characteristics such as population structure, composition, density, growth etc.

Chapter three starts with the great historical traditions in the state at Cooch Behar and evolution of the town with its location, evolution and finally the factors of urbanization in Cooch Behar town have been discussed.

Chapter four is devoted to the study of urban morphology and major land use pattern, their distribution and characteristics in the town has been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter five deals with the environmental issues and their characteristics in the town has been studied in details with special emphasis on facilities and amenities in the town by physical and cultural environment and living conditions of the people.

Chapter six has been dealt with identification of various problems and their cause. It tries to deal with different problems associated with land, people, infrastructural problems and environmental problems in Cooch Behar town and also identified under developed wards in Cooch Behar town.

Chapter seven summarizing the problems and some suggestions has been mentioned for their development in future. The strategies will also help to the development in the town. Thus the hinterland can also be developing.

Sankar Biswas
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