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I do hereby declare that I Shubhajeet Shome, my thesis is entitled "CIVIL SOCIETY BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS: A STUDY OF SELECT CIVIL SOCIETY COLLECTIVE ACTIONS IN NORTH BENGAL". I hereby declare that the work I have submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science at the University of North Bengal is entirely my own. It has been conducted under the guidance of Professor (Dr.) Ranjita Chakraborty from the Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal. I confirm that no part or entirety of this work has been previously submitted by me or anyone else to any other institutions, including this university, for the purpose of obtaining any degree. Furthermore, this work has not been published at any time before.

*Shubhajeet Shome*

Shubhajeet Shome

Ph.D. Scholar

Department of Political Science

University of North Bengal

Raja Rammohunpur, Darjeeling, West Bengal

Date: 22/01/24.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

Accredited by NAAC with 'B++' Grade

Dr. Ranjita Chakraborty  
Professor  
Department of Political Science



समानोमंत्रः समितिः समानी

Mobile.NO:9733013617  
P.O. North Bengal University  
Raja Rammohunpur,  
Dist. Darjeeling  
West Bengal, India,  
Pin - 734013  
E.mail : ranjitac@nbu.ac.in  
E.mail: ranjitachakraborty@nbu.ac.in

CERTIFICATE OF THE SUPERVISOR

This is to certify that the thesis titled, "CIVIL SOCIETY BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS: A STUDY OF SELECT CIVIL SOCIETY COLLECTIVE ACTIONS IN NORTH BENGAL" submitted by Mr. Shubhajeet Shome, has been carried out under my supervision and that this work has not been submitted elsewhere for a degree.

Date: 22-1-24

*Ranjita Chakraborty*

Dr. Ranjita Chakraborty  
Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Bengal  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Bengal



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Layita Chakraborty  
Professor  
Department of Political Science  
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Shubhrajit Sharma  
22/01/24

Lanjata Chakrabarty  
22-1-24  
Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Bengal

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*Shubhjit Ghose*  
22/11/24

*Sanjita Chakrabarty*  
22/11/24  
Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Bengal

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Shubhendu Ghose  
22/11/2014

Kanjito Chakrabarty  
22.1.2014  
Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Bengal

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*Shubhendu Ghosh*  
22/01/20

*Sanjita Chakrabarty*  
22-1-20  
Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Bengal

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Shahidul Shome  
22/07/24

Sanjit Chakrabarty  
27/1/24  
Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Bengal

# UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

ACCREDITED BY NAAC WITH GRADE B++

Prof. Arun Kanti Jana  
HEAD  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL



समनो मन्तः समितिः समानी

Phone: (0353) 2580192  
Fax: (0353) 2699001  
P.O. North Bengal University  
Raja Rammohunpur,  
Dist. Darjeeling  
West Bengal, India,  
Pin - 734013  
Email: arun\_jana1@rediffmail.com

## DRC CERTIFICATE

It is certified that the work contained in the thesis titled, "CIVIL SOCIETY BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS: A STUDY OF SELECT CIVIL SOCIETY COLLECTIVE ACTIONS IN NORTH BENGAL" by SHUBHAJEET SHOME, has been carried out following University guideline and has been approved by the Departmental Research Committee for processing by the Board of Research Studies.

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Name and Signature of DRC Member

*Jayanti Chatterjee* *Jayanti Chatterjee*

*12.12.23*

Name and Signature of DRC Member

*DR RAJESH DUTTA* *Rajesh*

*12/12/23*

Name and Signature of DRC Member

*DR. ISHA TIRKEY* *Isha Tirkey*

*12.12.23*

Name and Signature of DRC Member

Department:  
University of North Bengal



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Date: 22/01/24

*Shubhajeet Shome*  
Shubhajeet Shome

Place: University of North Bengal  
Raja Rammohunpur  
Darjeeling, West Bengal

*Dedicated to my parents Mr. Tarun Kumar Shome and Mrs. Bhabani Shome. I am forever grateful to my parents, who have selflessly given up so much for my happiness and well-being. They have sacrificed all their desires so that my life is filled with happiness and success. The hard work and humble lifestyle of my parents always inspire me. I hope their blessings continue to shower upon me and bring happiness to my life.*

## Preface

Environmental challenges are becoming more prevalent worldwide, which is a major concern as our living environment continues to deteriorate. Urban areas, in particular, are highly susceptible to these challenges. However, rapid urbanization is a crucial aspect of modernization in today's world. India is also experiencing a significant increase in urbanization. The rate of urbanization in India is rapidly rising, with new urban centers being established every decade. The main factors contributing to this growth are high migration rates from rural to urban areas and population growth. The North Bengal region of West Bengal is no exception to this trend. Known for its stunning natural landscapes, including greenery, forests, hills, and mountains, the region is also witnessing the rapid development of both new and existing urban centers. Unfortunately, this urbanization process is leading to environmental neglect.

I reside in Siliguri city. The place where I grew up is a unique blend of hills, dooars, and plains. From a young age, I have been fascinated by the beauty of environment, considering it as a valuable gift from Mother Nature to this region. Since my childhood, I have travelled into different districts of North Bengal and have consistently been amazed by the beauty of this area.

As a resident of Siliguri, I have observed the city's transformation from a small town to a large urban center. I am particularly interested in the impact of rapid urbanization on the overall health of the city, as well as the surrounding districts. Environmental degradation in urban areas is a major concern for me. Urban centers are usually the primary hubs for finance, healthcare, education, and business in a region or country. In North Bengal, these urban centers also play a crucial role in economic activities, healthcare services, and educational systems.

While exploring the urban areas of various districts in North Bengal, I have noticed an increase in environmental challenges. I am conscious of several environmental unrest, protest movements, campaigns in the urban centers of different cities in the North Bengal through newspapers, media. Throughout the years, I have come to know about similar movements occurring in other urban regions of North Bengal. My goal is to comprehend the causes and effects of these environmental disruptions in the area.

The role of Civil Society organizations (CSOs) is an important aspect of this thesis. CSOs play a crucial role in maintaining a healthy democracy due to their wide range of activities. I have always been curious about the significant role of CSOs in promoting a good and healthy democratic environment from different dimensions in a nation. My aim is to comprehend the role of CSOs in protecting the urban environment, both locally and globally. I believe that if CSOs are provided with the right environment to work, they have the potential to address and tackle the growing environmental challenges. In this thesis, I aim to explore various urban environmental issues, the different environmental protection movements, the role of CSOs in this context, the level of public participation in environmental decision-making, the significance of environmental leadership, and the involvement of political parties and administration.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

- ATREE- Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment
- CCHW- Citizen Cleaning house for Hazardous Waste
- CITIS- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
- CSE- The Centre for Science and Environment
- CSO- Civil Society Organization
- DDT- Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
- DGSM- Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal
- EFI- Environmental Federation of India
- EPA- The Environmental Protection Agency
- FCRA- The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
- FOF- Friends of the Earth
- FOSEP- Federation of Societies for Environmental Protection
- HNAF- Himalayan Nature and Adventure Foundation
- LEED- Leadership's in Energy and Environmental Design
- MOEF- Ministry of Environmental Policy Act
- NAPCC- National Action Plan on Climate Change
- NEPA- National Environmental Policy Act
- NGO- Non – Governmental Organization
- NPO- Non-Profit Organization
- NRDC- National Resource Defense Council
- NSWAI- National Solid Waste Association of India
- POPS- Persistent Organic Pollutants
- RCRA- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
- SJDA- Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority
- TERI- Tata Energy and Research Institution
- TERI- The Energy and Resource Institute
- TNC- The Nature Conservancy
- UFW- United Forum Workers
- UNEP- United Nations Environmental Program
- WRI- The World Resources Institute
- WWF- The World Wildlife Found