

DECLARATION OF RESEARCH SCHOLAR

It is declared that the work contained in the thesis titled “FROM OBSCURITY TO A METROPOLITAN: A HISTORY OF THE GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF SILIGURI TOWN WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ITS GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE (circa 1835-2014),” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr Karubaki Datta, Professor, Centre for Himalayan Studies, North Bengal University for partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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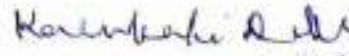
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This is to certify that Ms. Minakshee Kumari has completed her Ph.D dissertation *From Obscurity to a Metropolitan : A History of the Growth and Expansion of Siliguri Town with Particular Reference to its Geostrategic Importance (circa 1835 – 2014)* under my supervision. This is her original work. She has worked hard for it and no part of this work has been submitted for any degree so far. The dissertation may be considered for the degree of Ph.D from the University of North Bengal.


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1 FROM OBSCURITY TO A METROPOLITAN: A HISTORY OF THE GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF SILIGURI TOWN WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ITS GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE (circa 1835-2014) A Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements For the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HIMALAYAN STUDIES WITH SPECIALISATION IN HISTORY By MINAKSHEE KUMARI Under the Supervision of DR. KARUBAKI DATTA PROFESSOR CENTRE FOR HIMALAYAN STUDIES NORTH BENGAL UNIVERSITY JULY 2022

2 INTRODUCTION 1. INTRODUCING THE THEME: THE THEORETICAL CONCEPTS Fascination with the city is not new. It has existed throughout history. It is as ancient as the origin of the city itself and it can be found in the folk wisdom as well as the sophisticated social and political conjecture of the majority of civilizations. This obsession with the city- to be more precise ,with its singularity, with its strengths along with weaknesses, with its difference from the countryside can be found in all civilizations as diverse as the Roman, Jewish, , Christian, Hellenistic, Chinese, Indian, and Islamic. 1 The moment we hear the word City we start to associate certain physical characteristics such as closed agglomerations, big shopping complexes, sky scrapers, multiplexes, wide roads etc. the city becomes a physical entity. In addition to being a physical entity, a city is also a functional entity where economic, political and administrative activities are carried out. In cities, a large volume of trade, commerce and financial services is carried out, offices of enterprise groups, government offices and main units of administrative bodies are also located, which supports business opportunities. In addition to being a physical or functional entity, a city is also a social entity. Cities are heterogeneous places where people from diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds live in close proximity. We can also say that cities are also a place of social reproduction, comprising the myriad interwoven behaviours and activities of its inhabitants and communities, each of which exhibits idiosyncratic lifestyle preferences and characteristics. Innovations in science, technology and communication are first experienced in cities and then carried elsewhere, whether in steam engines, automobiles, the Internet or telephones or laptops. Each location grows 1 Ellis, Joyce, John Walton, and Anthony Sutcliffe. "SN Eisenstadt and A. Shachar. Society, Culture and Urbanization. Newbury Park: Sage, 1987, 391pp." Urban History 17 (1990): 214-215.



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The journey as a Ph.D. research scholar constitutes some of the best and worst memories of an individual. One is sandwiched between time restraint and quality reproduction along with many social and personal responsibilities. Many a times drafting and redrafting and redrafting shakes the inner core of the scholars, but all the hard work is worth after accomplishing the work. My Love for history was since childhood when my grandfather would tell me the stories about Babur and Gandhi and how he participates in the freedom struggle of India.

At Masters in Delhi University I meet a bandwagon of stalwarts who were highly qualified and trained historians. I think it is at this stage when an individual is at the most crucial phase of his life. In my masters I got the required exposure to develop critical thinking and treat History not as a dead discipline. I would like to heartily thank some of the faculties who were very close to me and continuously guided me throughout the course. To name a few are Prof. S.Z.H. Jafri, Prof. R.P.Rana, Prof. Amar Farooqi, Prof. Sunil Kumar, Prof B.P.Sahoo, Prof Parbhu Mahapatra, Prof. Shaid Amin, Prof. Dilip Menon, Prof Vijay Singh, Prof. T.K.V Subramaniam, Prof D.N.Jha, and Prof Shrimali.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABR	Assam Bengal Railway
AIGL	All India Gorkha League
AJNDM	Alipurduar Jella Nirman Deviin Mancha
BDR	Bengal Duars Railway
CSR	Coochbehar State Railway
DHR-	Darjeeling Himalayan Railway
EBR	Eastern Bengal Railway
EEIC	English East India Company
EIR-	East Indian Railway
GNLFF	Gorkha National Liberation Front
KPP	Kamtapur People's Party
NBCA	North Bengal Cultural Association
NBR	Northern Bengal State Railway
NBSTC	North Bengal States Transport Corporation
PS	Police Station
PWD	Public Works Department
SC	Scheduled Caste
ST	Scheduled Tribe
UKD	Uttara Khand Dal
UTJAS	Uttarbanga Tapashili Jati O Adibasi Sangsthan