

PREFACE

My subject theme is urbanization and field of study is North Bengal. So the title is “Urbanization of North Bengal in Colonial Period”. On the basis of this theme we highlighted the historiography. Urbanization is not a new one. In the world as well as in India urbanization had taken place and is an ongoing process.

If we look into the world urbanization, we will see that Kingsley Davis who pioneered the study of urban demography spoke of world urbanization. So many theorists are there who have studied urbanization. Basically we have studied civic institutions of urbanization, which have a long history. In 14th Century civic polity or civic Republic had established in Italian cities like Milan, Florence, Venis and Pisa.

The British colonial authority brought this tradition in the places of North Bengal and made civic institution there. Municipality was the main of these. Apart from this Union Board, Local Board etc. were there in North Bengal. All these are an experiment of Local Self Government.

The study indicates the colonial policy and economy was superimposed on a pre-existing pattern. For that reason Old Malda was becoming less important town and English Bazar had emerged with a new trade zeal of the colonial authority. Industrial development in Britain had opened a new type of colonialism. Colonial North Bengal had seen the foundation of plantation economy specially tea industry in hill areas like Darjeeling and of Dooars; silk industry of Malda and Jute industry of Dinajpur. Darjeeling as hill stations developed by the colonial masters as recreational tourist centres (sanatorium) as well as administrative centres.

We have studied the civic architecture namely the formation of district administration, District Boards, Local Boards and finally Municipalities throughout the North Bengal. The study also framed a broad civic necessities. The British frontiers expanded towards Himalayas. So from strategic, political and

economic point of view the colonial administration needed a good road and railway communication in North Bengal. Thereby improvement of roads, porters' and dandywallas management, Public Health and Hygiene like latrines, drainage, water supply etc and also education, street light facilities was much more important for the municipal administration and other civic wings.

We have studied trade and commerce gave North Bengal very much important economical status in colonial period. We have mentioned different plantation products made north Bengal a prosperous one. But of all these the most important was the tea industry which was profitable to the British for international demand.

People coming from different districts of Bengal increased the population and therefore the increased urban population appeared. It is argued that although urban population increased gradually in North Bengal, they were mostly migratory people. Therefore, the increase population did not see the increase of collection of revenues through taxation. The migratory people were mostly the plantation labour and coolies.