

Introduction

Urbanization means the re-distribution of population and a change in the demographic balance between rural and urban. This is a demographic definition of urbanization. Urbanization is never an even process. Some urban areas grow at more rapid rate than others.¹

North Bengal is a distinct territorial part of the present state of West Bengal. There was no region or territory designated as Uttarbanga or North Bengal in pre-colonial Bengal. Rama Prasad Chanda, the archaeologist and historian, had mentioned *Anuttar Banga* in *Gouda Rajmala* and poet Monorath of Gour also mentioned the same name in his writings. Nihar Ranjan Ray had viewed that at the end of the eleventh century Bengal was divided into two zones. *Anuttar Banga* which means today's *Radha Banga* or South Bengal was a classic example of this division, so it can be said that there was the existence of another *Banga*. In the beginning of the first quarter of the fifteenth century we get the name *Uttardesh* in the writing of the poet Krittibas. He wrote that after the completion of eleven years he had gone to *Uttardesh* for pursuing his study. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar identified this *Uttardesh* as *Uttarbanga*.

Kangal Harinath Majumdar had first used *Uttarbanga* in his *Gram Barta Prakashika* on 21st July, 1877. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the first Litterateur thinker in the history of Bengal, used the word *Uttar Bangala* in his essays, like *Banglar Itihas Sambandhe Koekti Kotha*, *Ananda Math*, and also in his novel *Debi Choudhurani* which was composed in the background of Northern part of Bengal².

Akshay Kumar Maitreya, the illustrious son of Varendrabhumi attempted to define the territorial boundary of Uttarbanga and even germinated the idea of Brihattara Uttarbanga or greater North Bengal.

¹ S.C.Srivastava, Urbanization, Office of the Registrar general, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, p.1.

² Ananda Gopal Ghosh's article on the "Historicity of the name North Bengal or Uttarbanga: A Study on the Evolution of an Identity", p.11, in the book of the 'Omnibus of North Bengal' The History and Culture of the Hills and the Plains, Vol.I (ed) by Anita Bagchi.

He wrote that the districts of Rajshahi, Malda, Dinajpur, Bogura, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Pabna constituted the Rajshahi division. This division may be taken as the territorial boundary of Uttarbanga but interestingly Maitreya did not include Darjeeling in his Uttarbanga. In later period we know the name of Panchanan Barma, the father of the Rajbanshi community of undivided North Bengal, had organized a conference named 'Rajbanshi Kshatriyas of North Bengal' on May 1, 1910 in the Rungpur town, for the unification of the community. This was the foundation of *Kshatriya Samiti*³.

The name North Bengal was used for the first time by the Famine Commission. The Commission wrote in the report that, "In October 1769 very gloomy reports were received from Bihar and North Bengal..." In 1877 we come across the name of Northern Bengal State Railway set up by the British government.

From the census of India, 1891, Vol.III, we found "Northern Bengal is a vast plain, appreciably larger than Denmark or Egypt (exclusive of the desert), and slightly exceeding an area half of Ireland. Although the least thickly populated of the three divisions of Bengal proper, its average population to the square mile surpasses that of any country in Europe, except Belgium."⁴ In that census North Bengal was comprised of the nine districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur, Bogra, Pabna, Malda, Rajshahi, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Kuch Bihar.⁵

Before the partition, all the districts of present North Bengal were a part of the Rajshahi division, but the headquarters was located in Jalpaiguri, the heart of the tea industry. After partition, temporarily the districts of North Bengal were incorporated with the Presidency division. The Jalpaiguri division was

³ Upendranath Barman, *Rajbanshi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas*, Jalpaiguri, 1370 B.S., pp.14-15, cited in Dahlia Bhattacharya's article on "The Rajbanshi Kshatriya Movement: A study of Caste Mobilization in North Bengal during the Colonial Times".

⁴ C.J.O'Donnell, *Census of India 1891, Vol.III, The Lower Provinces of Bengal and their feudatories*, The Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1893, p.37.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.54.

created after the Chinese aggression of 1962 and the districts of North Bengal came under the division and “Thus the geographical distance, communicational hazards and the administrative isolation had a combined effect resulting in psychological alienation.”⁶

The entire landscape of the northern part of the state diversified with Himalayan hills, sub-Himalayan regions and plains are recognized as hill, terai, duars and plains. As the title denotes the urbanization process in the northern region of Bengal was between 1850 and 1947; our primary concern will be limited to that period. What is more important from the local point of view and from the point of view of maintenance and growth of the town itself, was the institution of the local administrative body, i.e. the municipality which was more intimately concerned with the urbanization of the northern part of Bengal.

Out of the six districts of today’s North Bengal, the first Municipality was established on 1st July of 1850 in the district of Darjeeling⁷ in Darjeeling town. Before independence other two municipalities were established namely Kurseong(1879)⁸ and Kalimpong(1945). Although the Kalimpong area came under British rule from the Bhutanese kingdom way back in 1866 after Anglo-Bhutan War, the Kalimpong Municipality was notified in later period⁹. Malda district had two municipalities, English Bazar and Old Malda. In 1903 there was a municipality at Nababganj in Malda¹⁰ but it is now in Bangladesh. In 1885 Jalpaiguri Municipality was established¹¹. The Dinajpur Municipality was

⁶ District Statistical Handbooks,1951: Jalpaiguri, Malda, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, West Dinajpur cited in Ananda Gopal Ghosh’s article on the “Historicity of the name North Bengal or Uttarbanga:A Study on the Evolution of an Identity” 12-15, in the book of the ‘Omnibus of North Bengal’ The History and Culture of the Hills and the Plains, Vol.I (ed) by Anita Bagchi, B.R.Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 2015.

⁷ Municipal Report of the Rajshahi Division, 1917-18, Local Self Government Department, Municipal Branch.

⁸ Municipal Report of the Rajshahi Division, 1918-19, Local Self Government Department, Municipal Branch.

⁹ Census of India 2011, West Bengal, Series-20,Part XII-B, District Census Handbook Darjeeling, Directorate of Census Operations, West Bengal, 2011,p.16.

¹⁰ Municipal Report of the Rajshahi Division, 1918-19, Local Self Government Department, Municipal Branch.

¹¹ Municipal Proceedings,February 1885,Miscellaneous, Clllection 15,File 2, Proceedings 13-25.

established on 1st April 1869¹². The present paper shall confine itself to the areas now called *North Bengal* and placing it to the colonial period.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the entire urbanization process of North Bengal it is crucial to look into the process of historical formation of all the districts (except Cooch Behar as it was a princely state in pre-independence period) which had their own distinctive background in relation to identifications of constituent part of Bengal.

Urbanization in North Bengal began its emergence in the middle of 5th Century B.C. During this time the town that cropped up came to be known as ‘Gourpada’ or ‘Gour’. In pre-Sultanate period there was no common name for the whole Province (Province in British India, called Bengal), though Gauda, which originally formed only a part of it, was sometimes used to denote the whole or a considerable portion of it. Even in the nineteenth century Bengali poet referred to his native land as Gauda.¹³

Throughout the ancient period, Gauda and Vanga loosely denoted the two prominent political divisions of Bengal. Although actual political boundaries varied in different times, this rough geographical division persisted throughout the ages, but the names Pundra or Varendri (Northern Bengal), Radha or Suhma (Western Bengal), and Samatata or Harikela (Eastern Bengal) were also used.¹⁴

The district of Malda¹⁵ contained within its limits the sites of Pandua and Gaur, the capital cities of Bengal throughout mediaeval times. It is still uncertain which of them is the older. If, however, the claims of Pandua to identify with Paundranagar be admitted, Pandua is the older town.¹⁶ Besides Gaur

¹² Municipal Report of the Rajshahi Division, 1918-19, Local Self Government Department, Municipal Branch.

¹³ Dr. R. C. Majumdar, History of Ancient Bengal, Tulshi Prakashani, Kolkata, January 2005, p.1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ A story is current of an old woman buying up the entire stock of mercury of a merchant who had come to the place to trade and who had been unable to dispose of his goods. Her wealth (mal) was such that she was able to devote all her purchase to cleaning one tank only called the ‘parapukur’ (mercury tank) to that day, and thus to give the place the name of wealth. Another fanciful derivation is from Maldah, a string of deep pools, a feature of the town being the deep depressions left by old water courses.

¹⁶ G. E. Lambourn, Bengal District Gazetteers Malda, Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1918.

is never mentioned as a city by Minhaj but as a balad or territory and Lakhnawati was always spoken as a shahr.¹⁷

The really authenticated history of Pandua begins in Mahomedan times with the removal of the capital there from Gaur by Shamsuddi'n Ilyas Shah about the year 1353 A. D.¹⁸ Hunter in his *A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol-VII*, stated that Pandua is a later city than Gaur, regarded as a military outpost of the Mahomedan kings of Gaur. It is accordingly argued that in reality Pandua is the Paundranagar of antiquity .

The site of Paundranagar identified by different authorities with the places of Mahasthan in Bogra district which lies in the *barind*.¹⁹ If Pandua be the old capital of Paundravardhana, the new capital merely meant the shifting to the nearest suitable place for building of the site of that city to follow the recession of the main stream of the Ganges from the vicinity of Pandua. Lakhman Sen gave his name in the form of 'Lakhnauti 'or Lakshmanavati to the northern suburbs of Gaur, later known as English Bazar on the Rajmahal road. Bakhtiyar Khilji made his headquarter at Gaur and so ruled over the greater part of Northern and Central Bengal, and attempted to subjugate Assam and Bhutan.²⁰

Many times the transfer of capital had seen "The causes of this transfer are nowhere stated; but it was obviously connected with the changes in the river courses, making Lakhnauti unhealthy and uninhabitable. The various civil wars, with repeated plunderings of the city, might have hastened the transfer."²¹

From Humayun's time Gaur lost its strategic importance as the power of Delhi extended eastward, whilst at the same time a period of development of trade and commerce in Bengal was commencing with the

¹⁷ Sir Jadu-Nath Sarkar ed., *The History of Bengal, Muslim Period 1200-1757*, Academica Asiatica, Patna, India, 1973.

¹⁸ G.E.Lambourn, *Op. Cit.* p.11.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, P.12.

²⁰ *Ibid*, P.13.

²¹ Abid Ali khan: *Memories of Gour and Pandua*, p-17; vide Manmohan Chakravarti's "Notes on Gaur," etc. (*Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol.v, No.7, pp.204-234).

coming of the Portuguese and other traders from the west. This trade gradually introduced a good deal of wealth in the form of space into Lower Bengal. Sher Shah introduced the fiscal division of the *pargana* into Bengal : that in which Gaur lies bears the name Shershahabad²².

At the end of the 17th century Gaur had become, like Pandua, a jungle inhabited only by wild beasts, and the district an obscure portion of the province. In 1704 Murshid Quli Khan for the last time removed the capital from Dacca to Murshidabad, and this place remained the seat of Moslem rule till the battle of Plassey. After 1757, Calcutta finally became the capital of Bengal, as well as-until 1912-the capital of India.

Malda

Malda or Old Malda which was the name given to the District, was never an English station (both the French and Dutch had factories there in the beginning), and was situated at the confluence of the Kalindri with the Mahananda.²³ It was about 13 miles to the north of the Citadel of Gaur and four miles from the civil station of English Bazar. The surrounding ruins showed the former extent of the old town which may have first risen to prosperity as a port of the Muhammadan capital of Pandua. The town must have begun to flourish still earlier. In Akbar's time, as mentioned in the *Akbarnama*, Malda continued to be an important town. At that time Malda included 11 mahals, out of the 66 which comprised Sarkar Jannatabad.

Old Maldah had not only a great retail trade, but was also probably a large centre of silk and cotton manufactures from very early times. In a work written shortly after 1579 A.D., it is said: "Sher Khan

²² Ibid.

²³ W.W.Hunter, A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol-VII, Districts of Malda, Rangpur and Dinajpur, Trubner & Co., p.49.

gave to Shaikh Khalil money, rich clothes, and manufactures of Malda and Bengal in enormous qualities”.²⁴ The letters of the English Agents at Patna in 1620 and 1621 A.D.mention “doupattas(sheets) of Malda” and “a few Malda wares for patterns of Persia.” Uptil 1770, when the factory was transferred to English Bazar, Old Malda was the East India Company’s local centre of trade in cotton and silk. The French and the Dutch also had factories at Old Malda.²⁵

English Bazar or Angraazabad, is situated on the right bank of the Mahananda. This town consists of a series of trading villages which lies in the bank of the river for a considerable distance. Being situated in a mulberry-growing country, it was chosen at an early date as the site of one of the Company’s factories.²⁶ From the title ‘Maulda and Englesavade’of the ‘Diaries and Consultations’ of the East India Company from 1685 to 1693(now preserved in the Library of the India Office, London), it is evident that the Company had already a station at English Bazar during the latter half of the 17th century.The reason for this was probably the fact that this elevated site was found specially suitable for mulberry plantations and the production of raw silk.²⁷ Stewart, in his’ History of Bengal’²⁸, has mentioned of an English factory at Malda as early as 1686. This year the English factories in Bengal were confiscated by order of the Nawab Shaista Khan. In 1770 English Bazar was regarded as commercial residency and continued till the discontinuance of the Company’s private trade. Earlier when Dr. Buchanan Hamilton visited the district, he was much pleased with the appearance of the place-“There are several excellent roads, both passing through the town and in the vicinity; and in particular, there is one street, laid out by Mr.Henchman, a former resident, which is wide, straight and regular. The whole town contains many good houses, which are more closely built than usual and matter resemble a city of Europe than most of

²⁴ Vide the Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi of Abbas Khan Sarwani, Elliot chapter IV, p.372.

²⁵ Abid Ali Khan, op.cit., p.146.

²⁶ W.W.Hunter, Vol-VII, op.cit. ,p.49.

²⁷ Abid Ali Khan,op.cit, p.156.

²⁸ Stewart (ed), History of Bengal, 1847, P-199.

the country towns of Bengal".²⁹ Nawabganj (not the police station of that name in the extreme south of the district) practically was regarded as a suburb of Malda. Nawabganj police station, lies on the Mahananda, a little way above its junction with the Ganges and is chiefly known for its manufacture of brass ware.³⁰

In 1810 Dr. Buchanan Hamilton visited the district and wrote an account of the ruins of Gaur and Pandua, so far as they were accessible. Uptill 1813 the district formed part of the Purnea and Dinajpur districts, the Mahananda being the boundary. During the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon some of the ruins of Gaur and Pandua were restored, the Viceroy himself visiting the district in connection with the enterprise. In 1905 the district was transferred from the Bhagalpur division to the Rajshahi division on the formation of the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. It was formerly a part of the Rajshahi division, but was transferred from that division to Bhagalpur in 1876. The district is from 1912 in the Rajshahi division of Bengal.

Jalpaiguri

The district of Jalpaiguri³¹ which was the principal town as well as the administrative head-quarters of the district and of the Rajshahi division, Jalpaiguri situated on the west or right bank of the Tista river.

Before going to the details study of urbanization of Jalpaiguri its better to know its history. In prehistoric times the Jalpaiguri district formed part of the kingdom of Pragjyotisha or later known as Kamrup which extended as far west as the Karatoya river. In the 16th century the Koches under Visu Singh, the ancestor of the rulers of Cooch Behar, founded an empire which extended from Darang in the upper valley of the

²⁹ W.W.Hunter, vol-VII, op.cit., p.49.

³⁰ Ibid, p.51.

³¹ The name Jalpaiguri is derived from Jalpai, an olive tree, and guri, a place; it means, therefore, the place of the olive trees, of which there used at one time to be many in the town.

Brahmaputra to the boundary of the Purnea district. The Koch kingdom did not last long. One of them is Baikanthapur estate of the Jalpaiguri district.³² Until 1869 when the district of Jalpaiguri was formed, this area, comprising parganas Baikanthpur, Boda, and Patgram, was administered as part of the Rangpur district, a frontier tract bordering on Nepal, Bhutan and Cooch Behar.

The Jalpaiguri district was formed in 1869. After the annexation of the Duars in November 1864, they were divided into the Eastern and Western Duars, the former of which forms part of the district of Goalpara. The Western Duars was divided into three tahsils, viz: the Sadar, comprising the tract of country between the Tista and Torsa rivers with its head-quarters at Mainaguri; the Buxa tehsil extending from the Torsa to the Sankos river, with its head-quarters at Alipur; and Dalingkot tehsil, which includes the mountainous part of the annexed territory. Mr.F.A.Donough, Assistant Commissioner, was deputed to Mainaguri for criminal and civil work and was succeeded Tweedie, who was appointed in 1866 the first Deputy Commissioner of the Western Duars. Mr. Donough then went to Buxa as Civil Officer and was succeeded, in 1867 by colonel Hedayat Ali Khan. In 1867-68 Buxa was formed into a regular subdivision. In January 1867 the Dalingkot tehsil was transferred to the Darjeeling district and at the same time the criminal jurisdiction of the Titalya subdivision of Rangpur, comprising the police circles of Boda, Sanyasikata (now Rajganj) and Fakirganj (now Jalpaiguri), was made over to the Deputy Commissioner of the western Duars, the civil and revenue jurisdiction remaining with Rangpur. This arrangement lasted until January 1st 1869, when the Titalya subdivision was separated completely from Rangpur (with the exception of the civil jurisdiction) and was united to the Western Duars to form the district of Jalpaiguri. The Deputy Commissioner removed his headquarters from Mainaguri to Jalpaiguri town, on the West bank of the Tista, and the district was divided into two subdivisions- the Sadar, which

³² John F.Grunning, Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers, Jalpaiguri, Pioneer Press, Allahabad, 1911, p.18.

included the former Titalya subdivision and that part of the Western Duars, which lies between the Tista and the Jaldhaka rivers; and the Falakata subdivision which comprised the rest of the Buxa subdivision, the headquarters of the Subdivisional Officer being removed from Buxa to Falakata. The headquarters of this subdivision were again transferred to Alipur in 1876. On April 1st, 1870, the Civil jurisdiction of the Titalya subdivision was vested in Jalpaiguri and the Patgram police circle was transferred to the Falakata subdivision. In 1874-75 Patgram was attached to the Sadar Subdivision, and, since this change, the Jalpaiguri district has remained unaltered³³.

Darjeeling

The district of Darjeeling³⁴ which was the principal town as well as administrative head-quarters of the district.³⁵ The Government of Bengal acquired the hill station of Darjeeling as their summer headquarter. Military as well as Civil authorities established highland headquarters. Hill stations sprang up all across the British India during the course of the nineteenth century. Among the stations that regarded as official multifunctional hill station were Simla, Darjeeling, Naini Tal and Ootacamund: they were Government headquarters as well as social, recreational and educational centers for the British.³⁶ The history of Darjeeling presents a late chapter in the extension of British rule. It then formed part of the dominions of the Raja of Sikkim³⁷ (Sukhim or “New House”)³⁸, a petty ruler who had long been engaged in an unsuccessful struggle against the growing power of the warlike Gurkhas. From 1780 the Gurkhas made several attempts to capture the entire region of Darjeeling. In the meantime, the British

³³ John F.Grunning, op.cit., p.25.

³⁴ The name Darjeeling is a corruption of *dorge*, the precious stone or ecclesiastical scepter, which is emblematic of the thunderbolt of Sakhra (Indra) and of *ling*, a place.

³⁵ L S O'Malley, Darjeeling District Gazetteers, Logos Press, 1999, p.2.

³⁶ Dane K. Kennedy, The Magic Mountain, p.5 &9.

³⁷ Sikkim as said by Percy Brown “is a small Independent State lying North of Darjeeling; it measures approximately 70 miles from north to south and 40 miles from east to west, and is therefore in general area less than half the size of Wales.”

³⁸ Col. L.A Waddell suggests another derivation; Sanskrit Sikkim, crested, i.e., mountainous country cited in Percy Brown's book 'Tours in Sikkim'.

tried to prevent the Gurkhas from extensively overrunning the whole of the Northern frontier. The Anglo-Nepal War broke out in 1814, which resulted in the defeat of Gurkhas. In 1817 a treaty was concluded at Titalya. Darjeeling was retained as a buffer state between Nepal and Bhutan.³⁹

When the Company assumed the position of the paramount power in Sikkim, the strategic importance and scenic beauty of Darjeeling soon attracted the notice of two English gentlemen. In 1828 general (then Captain) Lloyed was deputed to effect a settlement. In Company with Mr. J.W. Grant, the Commercial Resident at Malda, he penetrated the hills, which were still a terra incognita to the British, as far as Rinchingpong, and during this journey was attracted by the position of Darjeeling. He claimed that Lloyed visited “the old Goorka station called Dorjeling” for six days in February 1829, and “was immediately struck with its being well adapted for the purpose of a sanitarium.” On all grounds, he strongly urged the importance of securing possession of the place, and, in particular, pointed out its advantages as a centre which would engross all the trade of the country, and as a position of great strategical importance, commanding the entrance into Nepal and Bhutan. At the same time, Mr. Grant also impressed on the Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, the numerous advantages promised by the establishment of a sanatorium at Darjeeling, and strongly advocated its occupation for military purposes, as the key of a pass into the Nepal territory.

The reports of these two gentlemen made the feasibility of establishing a sanatorium at Darjeeling. The Court of Directors approved the project on the ground that it might prove a valuable depot for the temporary reception of European recruits⁴⁰ and even a permanent cantonment for a European regiment. On the thirties of the nineteenth centuries, when some Lepcha refugees in Nepal having made an inroad into the Sikkim Terai, General Lloyed was deputed to enquire into the cause of the disturbance. The

³⁹LSSO'Malley, op.cit, p.19.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.20.

refugees were obliged to return to Nepal, and the negotiations ended in the execution by the Raja of Sikkim of a deed of grant on the 1st February, 1835. The Raja received a pension of Rupees 3,000 per annum in lieu of it,⁴¹ which was subsequently raised to Rupees 6,000 per annum⁴².

The hill territory of Darjeeling was ceded, General Llyod and Dr. Chapman were sent in 1836. When General Llyod and Dr. Chapman visited Darjeeling, all they found was some huts erected by the Raja of Sikkim, in which they spent a night shivering with cold, without bedding. By 1840 a road had been made from Pankhabari; there was a staging bungalow and another at Mahaldiram; a hotel had been started at Kurseong and a second at Darjeeling; and at the latter place some 30 private houses had been erected, and nearly as many more locations had been taken up at Lebong.⁴³

The new territory i.e., Terai was placed under the management of the Superintendent of Darjeeling, under whose administration it soon became a valuable asset, owing to the increase of the population and its suitability for tea. The whole country thus annexed covered an area of 640 square miles, and its annexation was an important measure; for it made the British boundary march with Nepal on the West and with Bhutan on the East, while it connected Darjeeling on the south with the British districts of Purnea and Jalpaiguri.⁴⁴

In the beginning of 1862 news came that the Bhutanese were making hostile preparations for the purpose of entering the British territory, and an attack on Darjeeling was apprehended. Their fortresses were captured with the greatest ease, and the whole of the Duars was completely occupied by the middle of January 1865. In November of the same year a fresh treaty was executed under which the Bhutan Duars, with the passes leading into the hills, were ceded to the British in return for an annual subsidy. The whole of the Bhotia possessions in the plains thus became British, and a slip of British hill territory

⁴¹ Percy Brown, *Tours in Sikkim and Darjeeling District*, Calcutta, 1922, p.5.

⁴² E.C.Dozey, *Concise and Complete History of Darjeeling District: Since 1835*, Darjeeling: Gorkha Press, 1916, p.3.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p.22.

⁴⁴ LSSO'Malley, *op.cit.*, p.25.

lying on the eastern bank of the Tista was interposed between Bhutan and Sikkim⁴⁵. The Kalimpong Government Estate in the district of Darjeeling formed part of the territory annexed under the Senchula Treaty with Bhutan concluded on 11th November 1865 (Aitchisons Treaties No. LXIII)⁴⁶. This was the last addition to the district, which thus acquired its present dimensions⁴⁷.

The year 1866 may be taken as an epoch in the history of Darjeeling. Peace was established within its borders; and thenceforward began the march of progress and civilization. Rapid progress was now at last made in the development of the communications of the district. Between 1839 and 1842, Lord Napier of Magdala, then a young lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, had been engaged in laying out the station of Darjeeling and in making a road through the virgin forest to the Terai. This road was very narrow and steep. Therefore, for the development of the frontier trade, a road broad enough was necessary. The construction of the Darjeeling Cart Road which subsequently made the alignment of a railway so comparatively easy, was accordingly begun in 1861; and at the time the construction of a broad metalled road from the Ganges to Siliguri was pushed on. By 1866 the latter had been completed at a cost of 14 $\frac{2}{3}$ lakhs of rupees, the Cart Road from Darjeeling to Kurseong had also been opened to traffic, and the lower section was approaching completion; while another road was being driven through the malarial Terai, in order to link the Cart Road up with the road to the Ganges and so establish uninterrupted traffic with the plains⁴⁸.

The two most important factors in the development of the district have been the choice of Darjeeling for a health resort and the subsequent planting of tea in the hills. An agitation for a railway effect in the establishment of the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway, which was opened up as far as Darjeeling in 1881.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Resolution on the Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of the Kalimpong Government Estate in the District of Darjeeling, Revenue Department-Land Revenue, Darjeeling, the 11th October 1905.

⁴⁷ LSSO' Malley, op.cit., p.25.

⁴⁸ LSSO' Malley, op.cit.

Although the hill cart road had already been made by the Public Works Department. In the development thus rapidly sketched the most important elements have been the local tea industry, with its varied needs and the advent of the European with his many wants; and in the accomplishment of the progress which has been made the Britishers gave the foremost place to education, both vernacular and English. Darjeeling has also been fortunate in having several officials, many tea-planters, and a succession of missionaries who have devoted themselves to advancing not only the moral and spiritual but also the material welfare of the people as well as the upliftment power of a progressive civilization.⁴⁹

Dinajpur

Dinajpur is the most North-Western district of the Rajshahi Kuch Behar Commissionership or Division⁵⁰. The Civil Station and Administrative Headquarters of the district was at Dinajpur town, situated on the east bank of the Purnabhaha river, just below the point of confluence with the Dhapa river.⁵¹ According to Buchanan Hamilton, Dinajpur is said to signify the abode of beggars and is identical with Dinwaj, a Raja of which, Gonesh, usurped the Government of Gaur. The name appears originally to have applied more particularly to the locality in which the present Rajbari is situated, and a possible explanation of it may be that some forgotten prince Dinaj or Dinwaj, was the original founder of the Dinajpur family, and gave his name to the site. In Rennell's Description of the roads of Bengal and Behar, published in 1778, it is given the alternative name of Rajganj. This name still survives in one of the wards of the town.⁵² In AD 1765, the British obtained the Diwani of Bengal and in AD 1772 or thereabouts an English Collector or Chief of the revenue was appointed to the Zamindari of Dinajpur. In 1769 H. Cottrell came to Dinajpur town as the supervisor of East India Company. This year was

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp.26-30.

⁵⁰ F.W.Strong, Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers, Dinajpur, The Pioneer Press, 1912, p.1.

⁵¹ W.W.Hunter, op.cit., pp.355-56.

⁵² F.W.Strong, op.cit.p.2.

specifically known as the beginning of British rule in the town and also the district of Dinajpur. But the real starting of this district was started with the coming of Mr. Hatch who was appointed Managing Collector of the Dinajpur Raj in 1786, was the first District Officer in the modern sense of the term.⁵³ Dianjpur was a district for the purposes of criminal administration and the seat of a collectorate from the early days of the Company's administration. The story of the district administration had been regularly decreasing the area. At the time of the Permanent Settlement, it included much of the present Malda and Bogra districts, and something of Rajshahi⁵⁴.

The district which contained 4 square miles had 160 acres of cultivated fields; 1600 acres were occupied by houses and gardens; 640 acres were common pasture; and 160 acres were useless from roads, sands, rivers and ponds in the time of nineteenth century. Buchanan Hamilton had divided the town into four portions. However while describing the town he had not mentioned its socio-economic description. Dinajpur was at that time purely agricultural, which is considered to be not an urban characteristic but a change occurred due to the coming of the British in this region. The division of the town was in four portions- "1st.- Dinajpur proper, on the east side of the Kachayi, where the Raja's house is situated. This parts consists chiefly of detached houses, surrounded by gardens; yet it contains many people.

2nd ly.- Rajganj, which, properly speaking, is the town, and occupies the centre of the district, on the west bank of the Kachayi. It is about a mile in diameter and closely built, but consists almost entirely of thatched huts. Near the middle it has a square, surrounded somewhat like Convent Garden, (to compare small things with great) with a row of tiled sheds, which occupy the inner side of the four streets, and serve as shops for retailing various articles. The other streets are quite irregular.

⁵³ Ibid, p.29.

⁵⁴ F.O.Bell, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the district of Dinajpur 1934-1940, 1942.

3rd ly.- Kanchanghat, which may be considered as the port. It is situated on the Punarbhaba, at some distance from Rajganj, and is occupied by merchant's ware houses, and the people who are required to attend on them. It is tolerably closely built, and may be about half a mile in diameter.

4th ly.- Paharpur, which contains the houses of the European Officers of Government, the public offices, the jail and the houses and gardens belonging to those whose attendance is immediately required. Like Dinajpur proper, this consists chiefly of scattered houses and gardens, intermixed with common pasture”⁵⁵.

He further said “the population, from the number of houses, at between 25 and 30,000 persons. The roads are kept in excellent repair, by the labour of convicts, and the town, as far as outward view, is remarkably clean and well watched, owing to the great exertions of the magistrate”⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Buchanan Hamilton, Francis: A Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of the District, or Zila of Dinajpur, in the province or Soubah of Bengal, The journal of the Asiatic Society, 1833,p.26.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p.27.