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.
The state West Bengal has a particular pattern of urbanization that is the overwhelming role of the primate city. It may be said that this contrasting pattern of urbanization has a great deal to do with the differing land tenure systems, the colonial economic policies pursued by the British, and the course followed in terms of economic development in these two types of areas during the post-independence period. First, we take up the level and pattern of urbanization in the area during the pre-colonial days. In those days, the towns were mainly trading centres, army camps, or places of pilgrimage. Some of the largest urban centres were Tamraliptra, Chattagram, Dacca were the port cities. West Bengal with colonial legacy presents an interesting course of transformation of traditional rural society leading to urbanization between 1901 and 2001. Towns multiplied in number and from 74 to 446, urban area increased from 1.030/0 to 4.50/0 and urban dwellers increased from 2.06 million to 18.7 million. This clearly entails to speed and scale of population pressure to urban growth and urbanization and that situation may be accelerating the natural phenomena of West Bengal in two ways. Levels of Urbanization in West Bengal. Generally, the term urbanization is taken as the percentage of population living in urban centres or increased number of urban centres. Urban influences on the amount and structure of agriculture in the North-Eastern United States. Colonialism, British colonization, colonial architecture, British period in Cyprus and Bungalow Houses are interrogated in the literature survey part. The existence of Bungalow Houses in North Cyprus is determined and existing 6 houses in different places in North Cyprus have been visited and examined according to the requirements of a prepared catalogue. King, in his study of the bungalow form, states that these kinds of dwellings are frequently located in Bengal. However, in some cases, it occurs in different ways. He mentioned that, “Whether the multiplication of the single, simple hut in the Bengal peasant household resulted from structural limitations of bamboo building materials or other cultural factors is not clear.” (King, 1984 in Kramer, 2006). North of it was the municipio or city hall. East of the plaza was the church or cathedral. Then around the plaza was the bullring or cockfighting pit. People forget that the so-called Pre-Colonial Period was preceded by a very long history of the systematic and cruel method of collecting of humans from Kenya and Tanzania, for slaves; for the use of people in Oman from the 7th century onwards. When the British came, in 1895, the title that was eventually used, called the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, had not been applied to the country, but gradually it was seen that education which was vocational and technical, was important and that the colony would have to put money aside to improve the lot of Africans going ahead into the future. The lopsided urbanisation existing in present day India is a legacy of the colonial regime which continues even in independent India. In this light, it becomes imperative to study the process and pattern of urbanisation that Bengal underwent in the colonial period. The unparalleled primacy of the colonial maritime nodes dominated the urban scene which has implications even on today’s pattern of urbanisation. The present paper tries to examine the pattern of urbanisation in West Bengal during 1901-1941 and attempts to identify the factors underlying the observed pattern of urbanisation. The socio-economic conditions of the districts in colonial Bengal will also be analysed to understand the relationship between the two.