

**SILCHAR:
PROBLEMS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF A GROWING CITY**

Editors: P.R. Bhattacharjee, P. Nayak & K. Sengupta
Publisher: Assam University, Silchar, Assam, 1998

ABOUT THE BOOK

This book is an edited volume reflecting a collective concern for Silchar, the main urban centre of South Assam and the strategic nodal point between Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya. The contributors of the book rightly harp on the point that in spite of the historic role played by Silchar in the development of tea plantations in North East India and in spite of its socio-economic and geo-political importance as the predominant node of the relatively disadvantaged south-eastern part of North East India, the planning for urban development of this city has not been assigned due priority.

The result of inadequate planned attention has been haphazard urban growth of the city which, if not managed on scientific lines, will very soon assume menacing proportion. This may seriously hamper the growth-potential of the entire South Assam with negative external effects on the neighboring states.

The readings that follow are sure to lead to the finding that Silchar suffers from all the maladies of a problem region on account of various reasons. Historically, its problem of congestion has been caused by human flows not only resulting from partition of India but also from social unrest in different parts of the North East, the Barak Valley being an island of peace and harmony. Economically, agricultural stagnation in the face of population has led to spectacular rural urban migration and fast growth of an informal sector, thus adding another dimension to congestion.

The city has also experienced ills of economic decay and infrastructural disadvantage because of its snapped socio-economic link with what is now known as Bangladesh. Silchar's problems also emanate from underdevelopment as its economic base is not related to vigorous industrialization (tea plantation providing an extremely narrow plank) and as much of its growth has been grossly unplanned, the city looking more like a sprawling village with urban traits noticeable here and there. Altogether the book has 19 research papers contributed by eminent scholars from different disciplines.

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