
URBANIZATION IN TINSUKIA DISTRICT: A STUDY OF DIGBOI AND MARGHERITA TOWN

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I. INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a process, which reveals itself through temporal, spatial and sectoral changes in demographic, social economical and environmental aspects. The process of urbanization is closely related to Industrialization process. Both process lead to major spatial changes in material energy flow, change in the exposure of the population, shift of rural labour from primary sector of secondary and tertiary sectors and causes various socioeconomic and environmental problems.

In economics, where industrialization is the only instrument of urbanization, the pull factors play a very important role for the rural people to move from rural areas to urban areas in search of employment opportunities in the industrial and tertiary sectors. Expansion of industries has lead to complex network in the towns of various sizes. New mode of transportation and communications has caused a wider spatial diffusion of urban activities.

Industrialization also plays a pivotal role in economic development as well as urbanization of the economy in the study area i.e. Digboi and Margherita Town

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF URBANIZATION OF OUR STUDY AREA

The district of Tinsukia is located in the easternmost part of Assam. The district has five urban centers viz., Tinsukia, Digboi, Margherita, Makum, and Doomdooma out of these five urban centers Margherita and Digboi are two major Industrial centres set up by Assam Railways and Trading Company. The main Industries set up by AR&T Company were:

- mineral based industries (i.e. coal and oil)
- forest based industries,
- manufacturing and cottage industries.

The history of industrialization in Assam was started as early as coal was discovered at Margherita in the year 1825 and its first commercial exploitation by "Assam Railway and Trading Company" dated back to 1882 at Ledo five km away from Margherita. The head office of five coal fields (i. e Borgolai, Ledo, Namdang, Tipong, and Tirap) is situated at Margherita near Margherita Railway Station.

Another history of industrialization in Assam began from 1867 when a small group of men from the Assam railway and trading company found their elephant's legs rocked in black mud. That smells somewhat like oil. The man began exploring more and in 1889, the English started a small oil installation. India obtained its first refinery in Digboi in 1901. The Digboi refinery is the first oil industry in Asia Since the period of British rule & has been occupying an important place in the industrial map of India.

III. COMPOSITION OF POPULATION IN THE STUDY AREA:

Our study area is a felicitous abode of people from diverse religion, linguistic and cultural origin. Inflows of people started in the study are during 448-2218.c., numerous ethnic communities of Mongoloid origin: migrated from the subtropical hills and valley of Ho, Yangtze Kiang and Mekong deltas.

Soon the British discovered commercial opportunities in the study area to run the above mentioned industries they needed manpower which they brought from outside as locals were not willing to work in tea, timber coal and oil industry. So caries, Mundas and the oraons of the Adivasi stock were bought to work in tea gardens, Bengalis were brought to work in clerical grade, Marowaris came to do business, makrani, Bihari, Telugu, Nepali to do manual work. Those were the days when Assam was synonymous with the dreaded diseases of Malaria Many would flee within a few days of arriving Assam, but slowly they began to stay here and become a permanent resident of these areas before partition. With the partition in the country in 1947 many Hindu Bengalis from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) (were deployed more particularly due to communal riot) came to settle down in different parts of Assam as well as in Tinsukia district

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the nature and demography pattern of two urban centres (Digboi and Margherita)
2. To study the Impact at urbanization on social, economic and cultural life of two urban centers.
3. To examine the problems associated with Urbanization

V. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on primary as well as secondary data.

VI. NATURE OF URBANIZATION

The nature of urbanization of Digboi and Margherita town is given in the following table

Abstrcut of the profile of Digboi and Margherita town

Table1.1
GEOGRAPHICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROFILE

Sl no	GEOGRAPHICAL PROFILE	DIGBOI	MARGHERITA
1	Name of the town	Digboi	Margherita
2	Name of the District	Tinsukia	Tinsukia
3	Name of the state	Assam	Assam
4	Status of the town	Digboi Town Committee	Margherita Town Committee
5	Total area	530 hectre	485 hectre
6	Town ward	08	04
7	Year of constitution	1960	2004
8	Police Station	01	01

Sl no	Medical facilities	DIGBOI	MARGHERITA
1	Govt., hospital	01	01
	Company hospital	01	01
	Private hospital	03	03
2	Educational Facility		
	Govt. schools/institutions		
	i) L.P schools	08	06
	ii) M.E. schools	05	04
	iii) High schools	04	04
	iv) Higher secondary schools	02	01
	v) Colleges	02	01
	Private schools/institutions		
	1. Pre L.P schools	06	04
	2. L.P schools	03	02
3. M.E. schools	02	04	
4. High schools	02	04	
5. Higher secondary schools	02	Nil	
6. Junior colleges	04	03	
7. Municipal schools	05	Nil	
3	Market Facility		
	i. Sub market	5	4
4	Transport And communication Facilities		

	i. Roadways ii. Railways iii. Airways iv. Post Office (main) v. Mobile and internet Facility	N.H 38 N.FALY Dibrugarh Airport (71 km distance) 01 05	N.H 38 N.FALY Dibrugarh Airport (86.5km distance) 01 04
5	Water Supply Facility	30% area	30% area
6	Banking Facilities		
	i. State Bank Of India ii. United Bank Of India iii. Punjab national Bank iv. Central Bank Of India v. UCO Bank vi. Axis bank vii. Life Insurance viii. Other Financial Institutions	01 01 01 01 01 Nil 01 04	01 03 01 01 01 01 01 03
7	Recreation Facilities		
	i. Park	01	01
	ii. Museum	01	01 under construction
	iii. Cinema hall	01	01
	iv. Club	02	01
	v. Community hall	02	01 under construction
	vi. Play Ground	02	02
8	Burial Ground	02	01
	Cremation Ground	01	02

Source: Digboi and Margherita Town Committee profile

1.2 Demographical profile (According to 2011 survey)

Sl no	Demography profile	Town	
		Digboi	Margherita
1	Total population	21,736	26,914
2	Male	10,964	13,777
3	Female	10,772	13,137
4	Literacy rate	92.08%	87.70 %

5	Dwelling units/Total household	4148	1191
6	Slum household	83	60
7	Slum area	22410sq mtr	na
8	Dwelling units with electricity	171	
9	Work participation rate	22.50	

SOURCE: Digboi and Margherita town committee report and Field survey

Urbanization and modernization in industries has led to a number of positive and negative impacts on our society.

Impact of urbanization on socio-economic and cultural life of Digboi and Margherita town

Urbanization and growth of industrialization has led to a number of positive and negative impacts on our society.

Change in outlook of indigenous people

Urbanization brought people together from different rural areas who initiated and learn from each other and from those already living in towns. This lead to stimulous process of change in life style of the indegenious people living surrounding the study area.

Market forces result a change in the economic activities of the tribal indigenous people. Domestic production has shifted into commercial production. Ready market in Margherita and Digboi town area inspire the local tribal producers to sell their products especially horticultural crops and pregnable commodity at high price to the urban consumers. They not only sell but also purchase various items from urban market centre, like junk food, utensils, electronic items and cloth, shoes etc.

Occupational Structure

In the study area available labour force can be divided into two main categories mainly organized and unorganized labour force. In the study area organized sectors provide employment opportunities to a large number of workers with a high level of income. Besides this in these two towns numbers of marginal workers is less than main worker due to maximum workers are permanent employee in nature. Marginal workers in two towns come from outside Assam as seasonal migrated labour. In both these town a host of educational ,commercial establishment provide employment opportunities to large number of people.

However the employment of women has largely been concentrated in organized private sector, educational and commercial establishments and un-organized sectors. But in recent years increasing amount of investment in private commercial and IT sector has opened a space to the young educated degree holder women to take up employment opportunities. In the study area a large no of women have started their own business by opening Beauty parlour, soft toy making, tailoring and weaving centre etc. By forming self help group, they have also started different economic activities like poultry farming, goatry, weaving, food making etc.

The workers engaged in informal sectors of the study area earn their bread by perusing low grade and low productive economic activities like domestic work, rickshaw pulling, thella pulling, loading and unloading, vending, construction works, blacksmith etc.

GROWTH OF MULTICULTURAL AND MULTIETHNIC SOCIETY:

Being an eastern most part of NER, migration however is not a new phenomenon in our study area, still now people have been immigrated in this area for various reasons. But here People of different ethnic origin lived together peacefully and cooperatively. In the study area people of different communities organize their own festival in different months of a year viz Bihu, diwali, chat puja, durga puja, bibi mazar urosh festival etc. People of different communities enthusiastically observe and enjoy these festivals. They are secular in minded, cosmopolitan in outlook and tolerant towards all shades of option and religious practice. Years old migrant people are generally influenced by local culture. Other than Assamese community non assamese people are also interested to learn "Bihu Dance", "Satriya Dance". They use Assamese 'gamucha' and females also wear Mekhelasadar. At the time of Bihu festival non assamese people use to greet each other by saying "Happy Bihu" and entertain guest with assamese pitha and their traditional items. Furthermore in public functions, felicitation with Assamese Gamucha has become a common phenomenon. This is the sign of urban integrations, tolerance and adjustment.

MODE / NATURE OF RECREATION:

In urban life of the study area the main forms of commercial recreation include cinema, gambling, dance, night club, house of prostitution, cultural organizations, commercial functions and festivals, etc.

The healthiest forms of recreation are park, cinema hall, cultural organization, commercial functions. Under the scheme of coal and oil companies "corporate social responsibility" set up beautiful parks for the recreation of all age group. With the initiative of private hotel owners bar is also opened in these two industrial towns. Another place of recreating in our study area is cinema hall for every section of people. To encourage talent and creativity of children different clubs and associations regularly organize cultural programmes .

PROSPECT OF TOURISM INDUSTRY

The whole area of Dehing Patkal is fabricated with the large number of ethnic tribes, In addition to these tribes, tea tribes and various non tribal communities live in the vast area from time in memorial with their respective culture. The historical Steel Well road is connected India's northeast through Myanmar via China. It is a part of the world's biodiversity hotspot. Along with the famous OIL Industry Digboi has other distinctive attraction to visit like (not caters to industrial and agricultural activity but also a sizeable section of domestic tourism activity being in proximity to) Dibrusaikhua wild life sanctuary, Namdapha National Park, Borajan wild life sanctuary etc. In Margherita also tourist can enjoy visit DEHING Patkai WILDLIFE sanctuary golf field Buddhist Temple, Ledo airstrip, tribal handicraft stall etc. All these aspects attract Indian and foreign tourist and researchers to visit in this area to take new initiative for economic and research development.

Growth of Elite Class

In the study area the elite class is the product of British company. The executives of Digboi and Coal industries have always retained British influence culture from the time of establishment oil & coal industries here. Club going, golfing, swimming, and tennis were lifestyle most of the executives since a long time back. Consequently this class is isolated from the general people of the study area.

Growth of Anti-social Activities

Urbanization also promotes the growth of anti-social activities. The increasing incidence of gambling, liquor consumption, coal mafia, drug trafficking, domestic violence, thefts, decoity, and other forms of crime is a matter of great concern of the conscious people of these two towns.

PROBLEMS OF URBANIZATION

So far as civic amenities are concerned urban area of these two towns have been suffering from some problems...

- Most of the commercial activities are along the main road i.e. NH-38 through the town for this reason both buyers and sellers face always threats to their lives from the speeding coal and oil loaded truck on the crowded market. In Margherita town Hapazard expansion of market on the both sides of rail line caused great inconveniences to the buyers as well as sellers.
- Though the Digboi refinery presently providing drinking water through community tap in the entire town but for other domestic needs, people depend on the shared pond and ring wells.
- No provision of sewerage system.

Market on the both sides of rail line caused great inconveniences to the buyers as well as Sellers

- Though the Digboi refinery presently providing drinking water through community/ tap in the entire town but for other domestic needs, people depends on the shared pond and ring wells.
- No provision of sewerage system.
- NH 38 located just beside the refinery. All the traffic including heavy coal and oil loaded truck damaged the NH 38 road.
- Irregular clearance of garbage and drain etc. creates another problem. Existing drainage does not have a proper slop resulting in water logging at different area.
- Unscientific and unhygienic garbage disposal and waste management system
- Unplanned growth of housing and buildings, narrow roads even carrying a patient in stretcher becomes tough
- Environmental hazards due to fish and meat markets in public vicinity.

- Lack of adequate drainage system creates artificial flood on the road in every season
- Lack of parking place, narrow road without footpath creates problem for pedestrians specially in Margherita town
- Unplanned construction of building without any regard to social hygiene or public convenience has created serious problem in the study area.

CONCLUSIONS /SUGGESSTIONS

Since the towns are in a formative stage planning is much easier here than other highly developed urban areas of the countries. So the local thinkers as well as the town committee should take it seriously and sincerely with purposefully action plans before it is too late. For the effective development of these historical and biodiversity hot spot area announcement and implementation of rural urban extension programme is need of the hour.

Keeping in mind the national and international importance, it is need of the hour to develop these two Industrial towns with proper action plan by the town planning authorities but the town plan should not only for developing physical infrastructure but also the Well being those living and working in the surroundings of these two industrial area.

More emphasis should be given on rural industrialization. Rural masses should not be exploited at the cost of growth of urbanization there should be proper coordination between rural and urban development.

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