CHAPTER – VII
SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

7.1 Summary

Urbanization is one of the most powerful socio-economic components of the modern society. It is the transformation of rural landscape into urban landscape through population increase as well as functional change of a geographical unit area and is closely associated with the processes of modernization, industrialization and commercialization. The principal ostensible causes and patterns of environmental changes in Tarakeswar pilgrimage township and its adjacent villages have been assessed through simulation and quantitative analyses of data obtained through both primary and secondary sources.

As the study reveals Tarakeswar was originally a small village in the past. But over the last few decades it has gained importance as a renowned pilgrimage in this southern part of Bengal. With the growing popularity as a centre of pilgrimage it continued to get influx of lakhs of devotees and pilgrim tourists in every year this village has now become very popular among the Hindus as the seat of Baba Tarakeswar. Now every year lakhs of tourists come to worship Lord Shiva (Baba Taraknath) in the temple beside a large water tank, popularly known as Dudh Pukur. The two main occasions of the year has been marked: Chaitra mela (March-April months) and Shrabani mela (August-September). This huge influx of tourists has been found as the main driving for rapid urban development of Tarakeswar – from a small rural settlement to a large and congested township – the most popular urban centre. With the growth of this urban centre as a municipal town urban facilities have also been extended, but certainly not at the pace in which the urban expansion has been taking place. The result is over crowding (often intolerable during the main worship seasons), accommodation problems and other physical as well as socio-economic problems like excessive solid waste dumping, filling up of wetlands, scarcity of supply of daily commodities including supply of drinking water and others.

Due to growing shortage of building sites, excessive rise of land price and environmental pollution many people in the present day tend to prefer living in the villages adjacent to the main township of Tarakeswar. The result is continuous and marked disappearance of agricultural lands, conversion of croplands to habitable land
plots thus making unplanned extension of the Tarakeswar Township. Although civic facilities are being extended to these now suburbs but they are not at the rate of growing requirements

Both positive and negative impacts have been studied by analysis of secondary and primary data. The greater part of primary data has been generated in the field through door-to-door questionnaire survey and thus perceptions of both residents and the tourists towards society and environment as a whole.

Through in-depth study it has been explored that Pilgrim tourism has been the engine for the economic development of the Tarakeswar and its adjacent area and plays a vital role in the socio-economic changes of this area. Baba Taraknath temple, Dudh pukur, Rajbari, Buddha temple attract devotees from all different districts and states of West Bengal as well as India.

7.2 Concluding Remarks
In conclusion the major geographical explorations upon the Tarakeswar Township and its adjacent areas can be presented under the following heads.

- **Rapid growth of population**

  Total population of Tarakeswar and its adjacent villages increased markedly during the period 1981 -2011. However, the decadal growth rate of population during this period has decreased. Spatial variation also has been marked for the population growth. In the peripheral wards of the town the growth of population is higher than the wards of the core of the town.

- **Growth of household**

  As the population increased during the past three decades the number of households also increased during this time. But decadal growth rate of the households maintained a mixed scenario. The decadal growth rate of the households has increased during 1991 - 2001. But the growth rate decreased during 2001 - 2011. The spatial variation is also seen in the number of households. The peripheral wards of the town are rural in character and land valuation is comparatively low compared to the core area of the town. So the growth of household is higher in the the peripheral wards than those of core area of the town.
• **Transportation**

Tarakeswar town has fairly good transport and communication systems. Rail line and road transport route both are assets of the town. Routes of these two types of transport system have been increased during 2001 and 2011. Growth of road is more than the rail line.

• **Residential area**

The residential area has been increased during 2001 and 2011 in the town area. About 7.73 hectare residential area was increased during 2001 and 2011. But the rate of increase was not same in all the wards. In the core of the town market, rail station, bus stop is located. So the growth of residential area is very low here for the high price and the crisis of space. On the other hand there is much agricultural land; waste land can be identified in the peripheral rural wards of the Tarakeswar town. The market price of the land to built households is not very high. The growth of the residential area in the wards is more than the central part of the town. In the adjacent villages the residential area also has been increased close to the administrative boundary of the town. Mainly the growth of the residential area in those villages is high where layout of the rail line, road both metalled and unmetalled has been established.

• **Status of basic urban amenities and quality of life**

The availability of basic amenities like drinking water, sanitation, electricity, housing, drainage and others are crucial to the well being as they contribute to physical and material comfort and quality of life. Through the analysis of this part of the research I have identified that residents of the town are not suffering severely from the crisis of any kind of urban amenities. Availability of the drinking water, house lighting system, latrine, sewage system is well but the spatial disparity of the different urban amenities is very high throughout the town. Availability of different urban amenities is mainly concentrating in the core wards. The peripheral wards are rural in character. To prove that statement Locational Quotient has been calculated on the percentage of tap water and ration store. Besides the quality of life of the resident of the Tarakeswar town is not very ultramodern. Process of urbanization are slowly changing the life style and thinking of the residents of the town.
• Educational and health care systems

A number of schools (mainly of Bengali medium) exist in Tarakeswar and its adjacent villages where more than eighty percent boys and girls are sent for schooling. These schools have heavy pressure of students because of infrastructural shortcomings and space shortage. In average each school has around one thousand five hundred students. However, the wealthy people prefer to send their wards in the English medium schools which are fewer in number. Health care facilities are available in the town but the infrastructure of the healthcare centers both public and private are not of required level. Inadequate number of beds, doctors, nurses and lack of advanced healthcare equipment are the principal drawback of the health centres here.

• Wetland land use pattern

Earlier there was a number of wetland Tarakeswar. But with the urban expansion, particularly over the last two decades many of them have either disappeared or shortened in size. Solid waste dumping and unauthorized land-filling for the purpose of new building construction are the main reasons of this environmental degradation. Only a few of the wetlands are still surviving. A large wetland existed in the central part of the city but owing to the extension and expansion of the railway line and its station this wasteland has now completely disappeared. Only some wetlands still survive in the nearby villages.

• Agricultural land use

The changing pattern of agricultural land use has been studied thoroughly. The economy of the people of Tarakeswar and its adjacent area has traditionally been agro-based. The main stay of the inhabitants in this part of Hugli district has always been agricultural base. A variety of grain crops, as well as other crops including vegetables is grown plentiful in this area as cash crop and the farmers earn handful of money by supplying these agricultural products to Kolkata. Actually the Tarakeswar township area is surrounded by extensive croplands. Thus agriculture is considered as the backbone of the local and regional economy.

• Solid waste disposal and management

Municipal solid waste and related pollution are the major environmental problems of this suburban township area. Improper management of the municipal solid wastes continues to create hazards to inhabitants. Studies reveal that about 90% of municipal
solid wastes are disposed unscientifically by open dumping and land-filling, thus creating problems to public health and the environment. An attempt has been made here provide a comprehensive review of the characteristics, generation, collection and transportation, disposal and treatment technologies of solid waste of the Tarakeswar township area.

- **Tarakeswar as a well known and famous place of Pilgrimage.**

  Tarakeswar town is famous for the temple of Baba Taraknath. Very large number of tourists comes here throughout the year. Maximum influx of tourist influx takes place in the months of March-April and August-September. This gives very good opportunity to the local businessmen, including sellers and hoteliers, to make profit.

- **Tourism and its economic importance**

  Pilgrim tourism plays a very important role in the up gradation of economic condition of the people in the town and its adjacent area. Because of the importance of Taraknath temple and its adjacent Dudh Pukur most of the pilgrims prefer to stay in and around the temple area. Thus most of the hotels and rental houses are found in this part of the town. Srabani mela and Chaira mela are the times of the year when the hoteliers can make maximum profit from the pilgrim tourists.