ABSTRACT

Land is the primary natural resource that fulfills our basic needs with increasing population. The study of landuse is an urgent need for resource planning which promotes the economic growth of a region. The landuse planning of Ghatal and Kharagpur sub divisions, Paschim Medinipur district started during fourth-five year plan period (1969-1974). Paschim Medinipur district emerged in the state of West Bengal on 1st January, 2002 from undivided Midnapur district. The study area looks like a large open plain composed of younger alluvium on the northern and eastern portion borne by river Hugli, Kasai, Silai and their tributaries. The geological formation of the study area belongs to older alluvium and newer alluvium. Generally, the physical characteristics of Ghatal and Kharagpur sub divisions are almost uniform plain area except the western and southwestern part of the study area which is covered by lateritic soil. The area of study is pre-dominantly an agricultural region which is important for agricultural growth and agro-based industries. The impact of agriculture and industrial growth is immense on the spacio temporal variation of economic development in the region. More than 89 percent of the total population is rural and the rural economy is mainly based on agriculture and agro-based small scale industries. Therefore, the economic development of the area depends largely on agricultural activities. New municipal areas and urban centres came into existence, natural income increased and a large number of people are engaged in non agricultural work as an alternative to agriculture. Transport network extends even into interior areas providing electricity, drinking water facilities, health care facilities, education system etc. Hence, population growth and changes in landuse patterns are quite obvious. The rapid rate of industrialization and urbanization in Ghatal and Kharagpur sub divisions lead to upheaval of socio-economic conditions. In consequence, landuse changes and development of the region in general and improved quality of life in particular may be ascertained in Ghatal and Kharagpur sub divisions, Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal.