

INTRODUCTION

While discussing Durgapur industrial complex, it is worthwhile to make a brief study on its background. It is not a project on history. But, a brief study on the history of the complex and the related affairs will make it more meaningful.

Durgapur industrial complex was a brain-child of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. This was true, but not an all inclusive description of the fact. His contribution on the complex was certainly more than usual. Dr. Roy was more a humanist than an ordinary politician. There were sufficient reasons to assume that this very rare quality of his leadership led him to go in the depth of the problems of West Bengal after the socio-economically disastrous partition. The population of West Bengal suddenly went up by the sudden influx of 10 million refugee. The state was already running in the socio-economic crisis. The added load put it in the alarming condition.

Becoming the Chief Minister, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy began to dream of lifting the economic conditions of West Bengal. But, it was never an easy affair as far as the conditions of the state were concerned. There appeared the necessity to move faster. In the mean time, the First Five Year Plan of the country was on the road. The industrial development became a national policy.

During the First Five Year Plan, a cell was formed to study and process the industrial potentialities of West Bengal. The details about the cell were not available from any source. It was, however, reliably learnt that the cell was operated under the direct control of Dr. Roy, the then Chief Minister of the state. It was

further learnt that the industrial potentialities of Durgapur were pointed out personally by Dr. Roy and were left to be scrutinised by the cell.

The early survey of industrial development of Durgapur was done departmentally by the Government of West Bengal. It was thereafter felt difficult to carry it out from Calcutta. The job was shifted to the district head quarter at Burdwan. This arrangement was continued for a little more than 6 months only. The growing trend of ground work necessitated the establishment in the area itself. By this time, the Barrage and Irrigation Department of Damodar Valley Corporation was operating in Durgapur. Little after the shifting^{of} the jobs at Durgapur, there appeared the necessity to leave them under an autonomous body for the sake of speedy disposal. That was the way to give birth of Durgapur Projects Limited.

Durgapur Projects Limited was initially a state-owned private limited company. The initial responsibility of the company was to survey and process the industrial potentialities of Durgapur. It was at that time operated practically as the agent of the state government in this respect. Since 1959, the company was developed as an operating industrial enterprise.

The survey by the cell and subsequently by Durgapur Projects Limited revealed that industrial potentialities of Durgapur were quite rich and by their effective utilisation, the place might reach at the new horizon of the techno-economic structure of West Bengal and the country as well. But for the limited resources, it did not appear possible for the state government alone to develop

Durgapur as a modern industrial complex. Till this time, the central government was not in the picture. The state government looked for assistance from the centre and the private entrepreneurs.

In absence of official records, it was, however, learnt that the central assistance for the development of Durgapur as an industrial complex was delayed till the Second Five Year Plan. Most obvious reason there was the scarcity of resources for investment beyond the earlier schemes.

The central assistance for the development of Durgapur was opened by the deployment of the Coate's Commission in 1955. The Commission recommended Durgapur as a suitable place particularly for the steel industry. The government accepted the recommendation and the ground work for Durgapur Steel Project was initiated in 1956. This might be called as the phase-change of Durgapur.

Till the closing of 1983 - 84, as many as 450 industrial enterprises are operating in the complex. They are of different class and category. This is a good sign in the normal circumstances. But, the resourceful persons believe that the complex has lost its earlier glamour and ceased to grow further. This is an unhealthy sign. The complex is expected to grow further, if the affairs there are set right.

The industrial development is considered as the cross-road to development of other sectors of the country. It is specifically important in a developing country as India. Durgapur industrial complex is not an ordinary set up. It has been planned to grow in the service of the deserving community. In all probabilities, sufficient scientific

measures are being taken to develop Durgapur as a modern industrial complex. But, the complex is not found in the right shape. As a result, the availability of the services is not as good as expected from the complex.

The present research project is launched with a view to study the geo-economic feasibility of the industries of the complex and to study the operating characteristics of the enterprises, so that a definite conclusion may be arrived on the prospect of the complex. Incidentally, it may be noted that field survey is the main source of information of the present project.