Chapter 3

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

3.1. Introduction:

The territory selected for the site of British settlement in east India by Job Charnok in 1690 was an empty region. The settlement was in the form of hamlets which was surrounded by jungles and marshes. The older settled area of high caste was developed along the old course of the Hooghly River to the south of this area. The new site of British settlement stood on an ideal communication line, surrounded by periodic markets of cotton and yarn like sutanati hat. Kolkata therefore, being situated between two river courses, was a narrow thin piece of territory, which was ideal for seasonal business and barter transaction. The English selected the highest level of ground (levee) on the river side as the site for Kolkata. But the swampy lands were frequently inundated by the salty water which existed in the south east. All these unhygienic factors were removed by the British by the mid 18th century leading to the growth of a cluster round the Fort (Map 3.1.). This cluster, covering an area of 250 acres on the bank of the River Hooghly, became a complex of commercial, administrative, residential and military functions in the eastern India. Eventually in next two centuries this cluster has out burst into a mega city with an area of approximately 187 sq.km.

3.2. The Physical Extension of the City:

The English men obtained permission from Prince Azim-Us-Shan, grandson of Emperor Aurangzeb, and Governor of Bengal and Bihar to purchase the village of Sootanooty, Kolikata and Govindapur from the landowners or the local zamindar Sabarna Roy Chowdhury and itself became zamindar for the three villages in 1698. These three villages extended for about 3 miles along eastern bank of River Hooghly and about 1 mile inland. The Company in 1707 declared Kolkata a separate Presidency, accountable to the Directors in London of the East India Company. In 1717, the Company obtained permission from the Mughal Empire to purchase 38 villages extending down both sides of River Hooghly on a stretch of 16 km distance. The modern Kolkata dates back to 1757 i.e. after the battle of Plassey where the English supremacy was established in Bengal clearly (Map 3.2).
In the beginning of the 18th century Kolkata consisted of European Kolkata (a part of dihi Kolikata), a residential village with some sacred traits (Govindapur), a traditional Indian bazar (Burrabazar) and a riverine hat specialising traditionally in cloth trade (Sutanati). These were surrounded by 41 agricultural, fishing settlements, trading halts, nodal points, religious spots and jungle of various densities. The town continued to grow steadily up to the latter half of the 20th century. Its unprecedented growth is evident from the following table.

### Table-3.1. The Physical Extension of the City Proper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area in acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1701</td>
<td>1682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>4997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>13237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>23629</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, 1951, 1961
3.2.1. 18th Century Onwards: 18th century onwards the British began to develop it as a residential settlement. Urban areas began to spread centering round original bazaar Kolkata (Burrabazar). With the proliferation of “bazaars” expansion of economic activities and increasing employment opportunities the population started spilling over and soon the neighbouring districts became crowded. Since pre-British days various localities began to develop after the particular race or occupational groups residing there, such as, Muchipara, Machhuabazar, Armanitala etc. in an unplanned manner. Similarly, the British distributed different areas among their tenants according to their occupation, such as Kumartuli, Colootola etc. This process again helped in unplanned extension of Kolkata.

3.2.2. 19th Century Onwards: Till the 50s of the 19th century Kolkata was composed of 20 mouzas including dihi Kolkata, bazaar Kolkata, Sutanuti, Govindapur, Simleah, etc. The suburbs included 15 dihis comprising of 55 mouzas like Sinthi, Cossipore, Pakpara, Chitpore, Entally, Ballygunge, Kalighat etc. collectively called “Panchannagram”. Under the Bengal Municipal Act of 1876, town Kolkata comprised of 18 wards-Shampukur, Kumartuli, Burtola, Sukea Street, Jorabagan, Jorasanko, Burrabazar, Coloootola, Muchipara, Boubazar, Paddapukur, Waterloo Street, Fenwick Bazar, Taltola, Colinga, Park Street, Bamun Bustee and Hastings along with port and the Fort. Beyond its limit lay the suburbs. According to 1881 Census, the suburbs were Cossipore, Chitpore, Ultadanga, Manicktala, Beliaghata, Entally, Beniapukur, Ballygunge, Bhawanipur, Tollygunge, Alipore, Watgunge, Ekbalpore and Garden Reach. After a few years almost all the suburbs were added to municipal Kolkata by another Act passed in 1889. Entally, Beniapukur, Ballygunge, Tollygunge, Bhawanipur, Alipore, Ekbalpur and Watgunge formed the wards 19 to 25 and were treated as the “added areas”. While Ultadanga, Manicktala and Beliaghata were also added to the town of Kolkata and considered as “fringe areas”. These areas were added to the wards 1, 3, 4 and 9. The “added area” lay just south of town proper or the European Kolkata, i.e., Chowringhee-Park Street. Subsequently, the “whites” began to move towards the south where spacious plots were available at a cheaper rate. They purchased the land in the newly “added areas”. This necessitated the improvement in civic amenities of these suburbs. Their inclusion within the Corporation’s jurisdiction was required to ensure improvement in drainage, water

Background of the Study
3.2.3. 20th Century Onwards: In 20th century the natural growth of urban Kolkata was accelerated with the intervention of the activities of the Kolkata Improvement Trust (KIT) (Map 3.3). The KIT was established in 1911 with an objective to develop areas in the neighbourhood for residential purpose. Other factors behind this diffusion were growing commercialisation, extension of Tram services and the drive to beautify the city. The central wards (wards 7-18) experienced demolition of Bustees and erection of pucca buildings for offices and shops in Chowringhee, Park Street, Lindsay Street, Wellesly Street, Free School Street, Corporation Street which had actually been residential areas just 10 years earlier. This displaced population had no other option but to move towards the northern and southern wards. Wards 1 to 6 and Ballygunge-Tollygunge area had an increase of 47 percent of population. Manicktala, Cossipore, Chitpore, Garden Reach were filled up by industrial workers. Therefore, all these suburbs grew haphazardly, maintaining a close link with the town proper. They catered to the need of the town but remained underdeveloped, uninhabitable, ill-drained, and infested with various diseases. The prospect of revenue earning as well as possibility of environmental improvement, necessary for the benefit of city itself, ultimately induced the Government to expand the city limit in 20s of the 20th century. With the enactment of the Calcutta Municipality Act, 1923 Manicktala (ward no. 28 and 29), Cossipore-Chitpore(ward no. 30,32) and Garden Reach were incorporated within the Corporation’s jurisdiction while the rest of the proposed area belonging to Tollygunge (ward no.27) and South Suburban municipalities was amalgamated in 1924. Entally and Beniapukur were reorganised into wards 18 to 20. Ballygunge became ward 21. Garden Reach along with additional 960 acres of land acquired from South Suburbs formed ward 26. Thus the total area added to Kolkata
Corporation was 8147 acres in 1923-24.

With the amendment of the Calcutta Municipality Act, 1932 Garden Reach was separated from Kolkata Corporation. According to the Census of India 1941 Kalighat became a separate ward numbered 23 while ward 26 represented Watgunge and Hastings (Map 3.4). Within a few years Calcutta Municipal Act, 1953 again extended the city's municipal boundary bringing in Tollygunge Municipality within its jurisdiction (Map 3.5).

Kolkata was extended again on the eastern, southern and the western peripheries in last two decades of the 20th century. Municipalities of Jadavpur, Behala (former South Suburban) and Garden Reach were added to the area under Kolkata Municipal Corporation subsequent to 1981. The core city area consisting up to ward no. 100, which reported a negative growth rate or decline in population. On the other hand, the newly “added areas” were accommodated within 41 wards. These extended areas reported a high growth rate of population.

This unplanned spatial growth of the city followed a particular pattern where principal utilisation of land was residential. With the growth of population commerce and industry also began to develop haphazardly.
The Corporation provided minimum amenities to these regions which were essential for maintenance of dock, factories and mills. The suburbs continued to exhibit rural or semi rural characteristics. Thus the city remained surrounded by the rural and semi rural belts forming rural-urban continuum. This particular feature of physical extension was termed as 'ruralisation' of the city by Manimanjari Mitra.

3.3. The Basic Land Use Pattern:

The expansion of the city under pressure of growing population indicates that the land was principally used for residential purpose. Since its inception more than 50 percent of the city's land had been used for masonry and Bustee dwellings, while trade and commerce claimed only 5 percent. This proves that Kolkata, being one of the major commercial centers of the country, is basically a residential city.

- **Commercial**: Commercial activity started to flourish since the earlier century which included the establishment of shops, godowns, warehouses, banks, stock-exchanges and mercantile firms. These activities were developed in Dharmatala Street, Grey Street, Burrabazar, Hatkhola, Jora Bagan areas, exhibiting narrow roads, extreme congestion together with the haphazard growth of masonry buildings, without minimum consideration about beauty. Another characteristic feature was that these buildings were often used for commercial-cum-residential purpose. Commerce continually displaced the old residents from the central districts.

- **Industrial**: Another important use of land was the industrial activity which was developed in Cossipore, Garden Reach. Jute mills and factories, dockyards, numerous small scale and handicraft industries were developed in these areas.

- **Residential**: Originally the city was divided into "White" and "Black" towns. A map of 1850 (Map 3.6) shows that this segregated "Black" area stretched from Bagbazar in north to Bowbazar and was inhabited by the natives. This was the densest part of the city. Whereas, the northern part beyond Muchoa bazar was thinly covered with habitations. Extensive gardens, large half dried tanks and houses in dilapidated condition were found in extreme north and east. On the other hand, the "White" or the European town, developed along Chowringhee, Park Street, and Theatre Road areas, was thinly populated. The "Intermediate town", extended from Colootola Street in north to Park...
Street in south including Bowbazar Street, Dharmatala Street, Janbazar Street etc. It covered a considerable portion between these two towns. This densely populated zone, being inhabited by the country born Portuguese, Greeks, Armenians etc., was considered as "ritually impure zone". This area also represented the most congested and unhealthy part of the city.

- Slums: A large proportion of land was occupied by Bustees or slums in the central business zone which were enforced primarily in the southern division where the huts were direct threat to European houses and gradually enforced upon the northern division. Slums existed in considerable number in Bhawanipur, Chetla, Khidderpore, Tangra, Ultadanga, Manicktala, Cossipore, Sinthi etc.

3.4. Housing characteristics:

Up to the early 19th century Kolkata was basically a city of hutments. In 1822 Kolkata had 67519 premises of which 15792 were tiled houses, 37497 were straw huts and rests were upper roomed houses. The thatched huts were replaced by the tiled ones in 1837 by legislation. Phenomenal increase in masonry construction started developing in the first half of 19th century. Throughout this century huge blocks of property tended to develop between the riverfront and the Cornwallis Street, College Street axis. The blocks...
were huge meshes characterised by poor ventilation and streetlessness. The residential segregation, mentioned earlier, exhibited distinct housing characteristics which will be discussed separately.

❖ **The European Quarters:** The British brought with them the concept of modern city. The quarters were constructed on well drained grounds. The style of building was Grecian, ornamented with spacious verandas, lofty pillars, garden ground.

❖ **The Native Houses:** The native houses were of two types depending on the socioeconomic status of the dwellers.

➢ **The Houses of Baboos:** Some affluent natives being impressed by the grand buildings of the European settlers tried to imitate their style, but they modified to a pattern that suited local climate and culture. The houses of wealthier classes were brick built, from 2 to 3 stories high, closely constructed and divided only by dirty, narrow and unpaved streets. Roofs were flat and terraced. These houses were uniformly built in the form of a hollow square with an area of 50 to 100 feet each way. The lower portion on three sides of the house, being used only for store rooms, domesticos, on remaining north side, was thakur ghar. Above stairs was the public apartment, with inward verandas. Separated from this main building accommodation was allotted to the females and family, consisting of smaller hollow squares with petty verandas opening inward.

➢ **The houses of poor:** The mass of poor classes lived in huts; the walls were made of mud or of matted reed or bamboo, roofed with straw or tiles according to the means of the occupant. These were uniformly placed on the bare ground, or on damped mud, but little rose which continually emitted injurious exhalations. The houses had to undergo frequent water logging.

3.5. Growing Congestion in the City Proper:

Since the beginning of the 20th century construction of new buildings steadily increased in conformity with the growing demand. With the increase of dwellings, building methods and styles also changed. According Census of India 1951, a sharp increase was noticeable in both masonry and kutcha houses between 1891 and 1901. In fact, the kutcha houses exceeded the former one by 100 percent. In 1901, 60 percent of the city population lived in these temporary dwellings. The areas in which solid structure
dominated were Jorabagan, Burrabazar, Paddapukur, Waterloo Street and Park Street. These areas were inhabited either by the *baboons* or by the Europeans. Where as, in some municipal wards the temporary dwellings were often double or even triple than those of masonry houses. For example, in Colootola, there were 4411 kutcha houses and only 1638 masonry buildings. Similar situation existed in Shyampukur, Ultadanga, Muchipara, Beliaghata, Ekbalpur etc., where the native masses were predominant. Thus, even at this dawn of the 20th century Kolkata's resemblance could be compared to that of a village. But in the following decades its rural appearance started disappearing with increasing house building activities. Shacks or huts were replaced by concrete structures, often three or four storied high. Many palatial buildings were also being constructed simultaneously. In fact, increasing rents served as an impetus to the real-estate investors, but even then lack of adequate construction site in the city proper posed a major problem for them. As soon as real estate became a profitable business huge private capital was invested in it. Scarcity of suitable land for new construction raised the land value. In spite of the growth in real estate this scarcity of accommodation in city proper led to the problem of congestion and overcrowding. Proof of overcrowding could be found even in 1901. The Census of that year stated that 89.83 percent of the city dwellers had only 0 to \( \frac{1}{3} \) of a room per person. Thus, it is clear that even then Kolkata was threatened by the two monsters- congestion and scarcity of accommodation.

A negative trend in house building activity was seen during the World War-I. In the period stretching from 1909 to 1914, 1702 masonry buildings were sanctioned by the Corporation, whereas in the next five years these came down to 1628. Moreover, the KIT demolished 643 old dilapidated buildings during the same period. This retrogression adversely affected the land value. The middle class Anglo Indians and the natives suffered from the evils of increasing rents. The landowners were keen on accommodating several families within one building in place of single one. According to the report of an Enquiry Committee of 1919, a family consisting of 14 members was lodged in two rooms of a well known building. They were sharing basic facilities with several tenants living in the same floor. Old buildings were also renovated very fast to accommodate more and more people.
3.6. The Emerging Housing Crisis:

The housing crisis in the city of Kolkata has been evident since early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Growing population pressure and consequent demand for land automatically resulted in high land prices. Two committees were set up to investigate and submit report on increasing land value, housing crisis and communication problem in the city and its immediate surroundings in 1919 and 1923. In 1923, “The Calcutta Housing and Communications Committee” was constituted to address the following issues.

- To determine for the different classes of the community with less prosperous European/ Anglo-Indian, middle class Indians/bhadrolok, the respective types of accommodation demanded by the member of their communities, and to consider possible modification.

- To consider the effects of land values and the land system on the existing housing situation, and the possible measures for improvement.

- To suggest the possible legislative or administrative measure to be taken up by local Government to facilitate the provision and cheapen the cost of standard accommodation without direct acceptance of heavy financial burden.

- To locate the place where additional cheap accommodation could be provided at a distance from the center of the city with the cheapest and most effective means of transport between house and place of occupation.

3.6.1. Types of Accommodation and Suggested Modification in Early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century:

Based on actual living condition the committee divided the population of the city in four classes.

1. The middle class Indians, housed as small families, often with sub-letting and shops on the ground floor.

2. Indian dwellers in Bustees and tenanted lands with huts.

3. European people living in flats with rents varying from Rs.150 to Rs.300.

4. Anglo-Indian tenement houses or houses let out in small suits of rooms.

The Committee recognised the existing scale of buildings as unnecessarily extravagant.
According to their opinion, “As regards Indian housing, in Calcutta the idea of building family houses, designed to provide for large joint families and to last for generations, must be given up, and that the community must recognise the economic reasons on account of which they would be well advised to confine their building operations to minimum requirements.” (Housing and Communications Committee, 1923, Page no.5).

The committee suggested a house suitable for a small Indian family, would be a four roomed house with a light terraced or pucca tiled roof, a plinth of 3 feet high, built with walls 10 inches in thickness, provided with a small single courtyard including a cook-room and necessary outhouse. This could be constructed on 3 kathas and 5 kathas of land in urban and suburban areas respectively. The estimated cost of building under the most economical condition was susceptible of reduction to Rs.4000 to Rs.5000. whereas, in respect of European housing the committee suggested that “the lofty rooms and wide verandas of the past need be perpetuated, the minimum height of a room prescribed by the Municipal Building Rules, i.e., practically 10.5 feet, need not be ordinarily exceeded, at least for secondary rooms, provided ventilation is adequate, that rooms may be of smaller dimensions, and that verandah space can be curtailed. These changes may not be welcomed, but we regard them as inevitable consequence of economic fact.” (Housing and Communications Committee, 1923, Page no.5). The committee found that apart from cost of land, the construction of a small Indian house costs Rs.10000, a middle class house Rs.30000 to Rs.60000 and a European house Rs.35000 to Rs.80000, involving rents, respectively of Rs.70 upwards, Rs.210 upwards and Rs.245 to Rs.560, in order to secure a net return of 7 percent plus cost of repairs and taxes. The average incomes of the wage-earners of these houses were Rs.80 to Rs.150, Rs.250 to Rs.800 and Rs.1000 upwards respectively.

This Committee also stated in its report that “The general economic conditions of the province, and indeed of the world at large, were during 1919-20 abnormal and unstable. Here in India the long drawn out continuance of war time conditions, with its restricted production of many essential commodities has produced a marked shortage, almost approaching a famine, in respect of many articles of ordinary consumption, at the same time the unusual demand created by the war for many commodities and raw materials produced in India, had brought about the receipt of large sums of money which created...
a feeling of exceptional prosperity, which resulted in a burst of industrial activity, brought about an extraordinary demand for land, buildings, raw materials and staff, with the general result that the city of Calcutta was called upon to accommodate, both for industrial and residential purposes, a much larger population than would normally have been expected.” (Housing and Communications Committee, 1923, Page no.1). Therefore, it is clear that the shortage of housing was created mainly due to increased land value in the city.

3.6.2. The Degree and Extent of the Rise In Land Values and Rents:

Report of the Committee Appointed to Enquire into Land Values and Rents in Calcutta, 1919 and the Calcutta Housing and Communications Committee, 1923 stated that there was evidence of a considerable rise in the market price throughout the city, though different portions of the town were affected in different degrees. In the northern residential part there was very little abnormal rise. While the rise had been specially marked in the commercial areas like Burra Bazar and in the southern part of the city, the Anglo-Indian community was perhaps the worst sufferers. The rise in values was clearly indicated by sale prices as well as by the demand for the Port Commissioners’ land in Howrah and Khidderpore at rents twice or three times those demanded but not always obtained before the armistice. Though it is impossible to give exact figures representing the remarkable rise, it is assumed that a rise of 50 percent was not uncommon, and in many cases the rise had been 100 percent and over. In this connection it is important to remember that a certain amount of property had changed hands at obvious speculative prices.

3.6.3. The Causes of Rise in Land Values and Rents:

The Committee of 1919 pointed out the following causes of the remarkable rises in land values and rents:

1. General: The rise had been preceded by a general rise followed the theory of a 5 percent rise yearly in the value of land. As a city growing in health and wealth, is prevented from expanding beyond certain limits by the unhealthy character of the suburbs leading to price hike. So has been the case for Kolkata. Rampant prevalence of malaria, defective drainage, inadequate water supply, inefficient communication system
in the suburbs had almost entirely prevented a growing population from spreading out over the cheaper lands of suburbs. The inevitable result was that the increased demand for buildings and lands within the city has caused a gradual and continuous increase in the value of property. Further the superior healthiness and attraction of the city led to immigration of richer and leisured classes. The innate sentiments of certain classes of the population to leave the area of their ancestors for generations and the immobility of some had undoubtedly contributed to high prices for landed property and high rents in the northern sections.

2. **Fortunes made during the war:** Sections of commercial population of Kolkata had amassed very large fortunes during the war, and during the years 1918 and 1919, invested very largely in landed property. Past history had proved that prices paid for land in the city, which at the time were considered to be of a speculative character, had soon been overtaken by the market. The so called speculative buyer within a comparatively short period of years had been able to sell at a profit. Being aware of this historical fact people paid what appear to be high speculative prices, combined with the large amount of free money and the indications of a commercial boom in Kolkata, had led to the very high prices. The desire to invest in a landed property had also an accumulative effect.

3. **Commercial activity:** After the armistice in Kolkata there had been considerable commercial activity in Kolkata and its neighbourhood. Several English firms had decided to open works in or near the city. This increased industrial activity had not only increased the price of land and property, but also led people to believe that land in Kolkata would appreciate greatly in value during the next few years. This was again responsible for rise in land price.

4. **Increase in population:** The above mentioned industrial activities must have been accompanied by an increase in the population. Since the armistice there had been a considerable influx of Europeans and Japanese to some extent. This increase in population had not been accompanied by any building operations largely owing to the difficulty to obtaining certain materials and to their prohibitive price. In these
circumstances the sudden rise in the value of property was not only surprising but was inevitable.

5. **Increase in the cost of building:** The increased cost of building had also been suggested as one of the causes. This increase must have affected the price of property in the very much free market. The increased cost of repair may also have had some effect on the rise in rent.

6. **General increase in prices:** The Committee opined that the increase in prices of all articles of ordinary consumption contributed to the rise in land values and rents. Consequently the landowners also increased rent.

7. **Delayed development of suburbs:** It was pointed out that KIT was unable to carry through schemes of development of the suburbs owing to causes beyond their control led to the rise in price of land.

8. **Sale of surplus land by auction:** The practice of KIT and the Kolkata Corporation of selling their surplus lands by auction was responsible for abnormal increase in land values and rents. The Committee agreed in the view that the auction system, even with its admitted disadvantages, was the only safe course which the KIT and Corporation could follow for the disposal of such land as remains for sale in the open market.

9. **Others:** Other than the above mentioned reasons some other reasons were responsible for high cost of land in Kolkata. Such as,

   I. Complete absence of any conception of loss of interest on capital invested in land.

   II. Satisfaction of the great body of landholders with a low rate of interest in the form of rent.

   III. Attractiveness of landholding as a form of investment for safety.

   IV. Unwillingness to sell at less than a rate in the owner’s mind.

   V. Building was almost a national recreation in Bengal.

   VI. Desire to provide housing for descendants.
VII. Tendency of Indian family system to keep relatives in one locality and so produce inter-acting pressure.

VIII. Government buildings, estates and activities in the central areas which could be equally well carried on in the outer areas.

IX. Satisfaction with overcrowded houses and unsanitary conditions.

X. High cost of development of outer areas, particularly of sewage disposal.

3.6.4. Suggested Remedies of Direct Effect:

According to the committees, the problem of inflated land values and high rent could be solved permanently by rapid development of the suburbs, and the improvement of communication and the means of transport within the city proper and between the city and its suburbs. The Committee of 1919 suggested that “an Act should be passed immediately, appointing an authority to whom all parties under notice to quit and admitting their liability to ejectment could apply for an extension of the date by which they will have to vacate, or an extension of the period of the notice to quit. So long, as the present scarcity continues, this short period allowed by the law for the vacation of premises causes great hardship to those who are ejected unconditionally or who can not afford to pay the higher rent demanded.” (Report of the Committee Appointed to Enquire into the Land Values and Rents in Calcutta, 1919, Page no.7). The recommendations are as follows:

I. The Act should apply to all property except property under construction at the time of, or built after, the passing of the Act.

II. The Act should operate in the first instance for a period of 3 years, but should contain a provision empowering the Governor in council to extend it by notification for a further period of 2 years.

III. The Act should extend to the areas falling within the boundaries of Calcutta Corporation, the municipalities of Howrah, Manicktala, Cossipore-Chitpur, Tollygunge, Gardan Reach, and the south suburban municipality.

The Housing and Communication committee (1923) also repeated this recommendation made by Rent committee of 1919 in the form of implementation of Land Acquisition Act.
3.6.5. Suggested Remedies of Indirect Effect:

The committees also suggested the following remedies of indirect effects-

a. To explore the possibilities of the co-operative principle in building.

b. The leasehold system was expected to facilitate the building operations.

c. Amendment of law to facilitate the creation of mortgage on property which would be acceptable to the banks.

d. Introduction of property exchange as tending to set up a standard in land values and dealing in lands.

e. The committees, therefore, were in search of something further than KIT and KMC. The Communication Committee suggested the utilisation of the Public Works Conference in an improved and enlarged form.

f. A body, referred to as the “Development Board” was suggested to be set up for the purpose of carrying out schemes for the provision of building sites. The Board was planned to have the double function of carrying out developmental operation on a large scale in the suburbs and also of exercising a controlling authority over the activities of various bodies.

g. The areas were chosen in and around the whole of the suburbs and outside as well as within the municipal boundary. This would probably mean in practice, areas each approaching a 1000 bighas in extent, should be chosen from the point of view of convenience of communication. Some suggested suburbs were Tollygunge, Ballygunge, Tiljala, the eastern half of Cossipore-Chitpore, Dum Dum, Howrah, and near to the more adjacent suburban stations on the railway serving Kolkata.

h. Before using the land for housing purpose, development of drainage system, sewerage schemes and water supply were recommended. The Development Board was expected to devise a lay out for this, providing open spaces, sewerage disposal and for main road communications in the future.

i. The Board was recommended to raise capital by means of loans, not by taxation, other than income from outside.
j. Under the provision of Land Acquisition Act, Government was suggested to acquire land for bodies formed definitely for the provision of housing accommodation.

k. A Town Planning Act for Kolkata and its environment was necessary in order to reach a permanent solution to the housing problem.

l. It was expected that, if whole of the building lands within the city were fully developed, the amount of housing accommodation would be very considerably increased, even if allowance were made for a more generous provision of open spaces and roads.

m. Government open lands in central areas, such as Strand Bank lands, were advised to be fully utilised for housing.

n. Providing housing to Government employees was recommended to be taken up by the Government in collaboration with non-Government enterprises.

o. All the factories were advised to be removed outside the central area, and the land thus vacated could be used for housing. Moreover, the Corporation was suggested not to license any more factories in central areas.

p. The committees supported the proposal of removing the Mint and drew special attention to the Chitpore Marshalling yard and the proposed Port Commissioners' Marshalling yard at Behala.

q. Inclusion of Howrah and other municipalities within the jurisdiction of the Kolkata Corporation was recommended.

r. Lastly, education was regarded as the only remedy against the satisfaction with overcrowded and unsanitary conditions especially characteristic of the coolie class, and against uninformed objections or such matters as septic tank effluents.

3.7. Proliferation of Residential Zone:

The marked residential segregation of the previous century became less distinct in the 20th century. The intermediate town came to be inhabited by Hindu Bengalis, Bengali Muslims and non-Bengalis. The “White” town also began to be threatened by the Indian squatters. Bengalis were dominant in Shampukur, Jorasanko, Kumartuli, Kalighat and...
While non-Bengalis dominated in Burrabazar, Jorabagan etc. and Muslims dominated in Ekbalpur-Watgunge area. But these demarcations were not all perfect. In fact, the non-Bengalis (mainly Marwaris) were steadily penetrating into the Bengali dominated wards. The Bengalis from north Kolkata purchased plots in Kalighat, Alipore, Bhawanipur and Tollygunge areas. These instances reveal the underlying trend of the withdrawal of the Bengalis from the Northern and Central zones of the city. The probable reasons behind this withdrawal were as follows:

- The northern wards of the city proper were already over congested and apparently open spaces were easier to be found in the south.
- The old wealthy families of north Kolkata, after generations, no longer had the means to maintain huge establishments. Therefore, they began to sell their properties and move towards suburbs where cheap land was available.
- The immigrant Bengalis from neighbouring districts of Howrah, Hooghly, 24 Parganas and Nadia as well as from other distant places of Birbhum, Murshidabad, Dhaka, Khulna, Jessore settled in the suburbs.
- Bengali landholdings were repeatedly acquired by the KIT, but the newly developed localities remained out of reach of the middle class Bengalis.
- Bengalis, with their limited resources, perhaps found the lands in the suburbs or in newly added areas cheaper and hence within their means.

N.K. Bose has observed during the 20th century the commercial firms were occupied by the Marwaris who became financially involved in real estate business. This led them, particularly the business magnets, to move towards the comparatively sparsely inhabited southern wards. Increasingly, they acquired properties in both Bengali dominated wards of Kalighat, Alipore, Tollygunge, Keyatala, Gariahat, Garcha Road, Hazra, Russa Road, Bhawanipur etc. as well as the former so called “White” town areas.

This process continued and intensified in post-World War II period with the “commercial boom”. Due to political instability and subsequent upheavals in East Bengal the city witnessed a sharp rise in new settlers during 1930s and 1940s leading to shortage of housing. As a result more and more immigrant Bengalis of south Kolkata (stretching...
from Bhawanipur to Gariahat) started to move towards further south, i.e., Dhakuria, Jadavpur, Garia etc.

The unprecedented rise in population was evident in southern and eastern part of the city. These areas, Bhowanipur, Kalighat, Khidderpore and Chetla in the south as well as the Canal West area in the north actually developed with extensive residential settlements. In fact, the “black town” had already become crowded in the previous century, hence new settlements developed mostly in the southern and eastern sections. These were consequently incorporated within the city proper. A survey by Prof. N.K. Bose reveals that rate of increase in residential use of land rose from 41.72 percent (1911) to 61.65 percent (1961) of the total developed land in Kolkata. Murari Ghosh has calculated this rise as 116 percent.

Though the city was basically residential in character and land use for this purpose steadily increased, the proportion of Bustee land continually decreased. This incidence neither means any improvement in residential facilities, nor the solution to the problem of the city population to afford the luxury of living in pucca houses. It was the conscious effort of the city authorities to beautify the city and wipe out Bustees from the heart of the city. In fact, their attention was targeted on improvement on “locality”, rather than “Bustees”. The Act of 1876 had given the Commissioner the responsibility to demolish Bustees or blocks of huts which was injurious to the health of the locality. That is why the Bustees declined in number in the city proper but continued to exist, perhaps in greater number, in the periphery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pucca houses</th>
<th>Bustee houses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, 1951

Following the British examples in cities such as Glasgow the KIT in 1911 was created to undertake sanitary improvement and sum clearance. The activities of KIT were responsible for the decrease of Bustee houses in 1935-36. In improving the city’s living...
condition on account of which the Trust was systematically clearing up congested areas in north and north east. On the other hand, new building areas were created in south and south east. New Bustees were discouraged. The slums were increasing just outside its jurisdiction in Tollyguge.

3.8. Post-Independence Development:

In the Post-Independence era the situation became even worse. According to the Census of 1951, “the increase in population in last 20 years has been as remarkable as her growth during the past 2 centuries”. (Census of India, 1951, Appendix, Page no i) In 20 years the population increased from 1163771 (1931) to 2548677 (1951). In 1960, 89.64 percent lived in houses made of cement and bricks. In these, 88.83 percent of the overall urban tenant families resided. But it is not an indication of the progress in housing sector, the existence of Bustee remained unaltered. 68 percent of them were permanent types, while the rest were tin shacks or mud huts. There were 3 different types of dwellings existing in mid 20th century Kolkata. These were-

1. Modern tenement houses
2. Old buildings adopted to new conditions
3. The huts

The problem of accommodation became more acute. The Census of 1951 estimated that there were 606026 units consisting of 1 room or more each and 710579 living rooms. They accommodated 4.2 persons per census unit. The influx of refugee population, which was almost 25 percent of the city’s total population, accentuated the problem of congestion. The Chairman of KIT in 1955 revealed that there were houses in the fashionable areas of the city where each room of the main building was occupied by separate individual families, while the outhouses gave shelter to twenty such families who were compelled to share one latrine and one bathroom between themselves. In 1963 a survey, elaborated that a house owner, along with his family, occupied 3 rooms with approximately 383 sq. ft. of floor area; whereas, tenant families occupied 2 rooms. There were 73 percent tenant families and only 19 percent owners. Moreover, 57 percent of the tenant family occupied single room, where as, 80 percent of the owner had the privilege to live in more than a single room. It also explained that 30 percent of
the families paying rent, having a monthly income of above Rs 700, enjoyed independent residential quarters with all civic facilities, while, 70 percent had to share these civic amenities collectively among themselves. Finally it pointed out that average number of persons per room was 2.99. This density was lowest in Ballygunge-Bhawanipur area and highest in the Burrabazar (91 percent) followed by Sealdah, Dharmotolla, Khidderpore, Chetla. Lowest proportion was observed in Tollygunge (49 percent). Average rent per room and per 100 sq. ft. was highest in Bhawanipur-Ballygunge area (Rs. 42.38 and Rs. 34.80 respectively). It was lowest in Cossipore, Sinthi, Paikpara, Belgachhia, Tangra ranging from Rs. 17.91 to Rs. 18.35.

The KIT was developing areas on the fringe of the city. Tanks and paddy fields were being gradually covered with bricks, rural lanes and muddy paths were transformed into mechanised roads. After developing the sites KIT offered the plots for sale. This deliberate attempt of KIT of dispersing population over a large area was supported by the State Transport Department and the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation adequately. During the period of rapid expansion since 1930 Kolkata had not grown skyward in multi-storied buildings but had grown and built only laterally in south ward. Dilapidated old buildings too, were under the pressure of surplus inhabitants and the civic amenities in them were insufficient. Insufficient light, scarcity of water, inadequate ventilation were the main problems. Under the pressure of population explosion the cellars, originally made for storage, also served as living quarters for many. In spite of the adverse living conditions a large number of people crowded the business centers and market areas due to the proximity to place of work. These old buildings also accommodated the industrial workers at higher rates, as most of the employers did not provide quarters to their workers. The management of jute industries, cotton mills, the Port Trust built some identical quarters for their workers. These cramped houses were not suitable for healthy living.

3.8.1. Introduction of Planning In Housing:

In 1961 the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation (CMPO) was established as a unit within the State Development Department to secure and promote the development of the Kolkata Metropolitan District according to plan for the first time. The
improvement of housing conditions was one of the prime objectives of a comprehensive plan. In the First Report, 1962 the CMPO estimated that two thirds of the people within the city of Kolkata lived in kutch buildings and more than 57 per cent of multi member families had only one room to live in. For more than half of the families cramped into one-room quarters there were only 30 square feet or less per family member. One quarter of the people in the cities lived in Bustees or slums.

Table-3.3. Population in Kolkata and KMD, 1961

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Kolkata</th>
<th>KMD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>2927000</td>
<td>6721000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household population</td>
<td>2635000</td>
<td>6325000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houseless</td>
<td>18000</td>
<td>30000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CMPO, 1969

Housing presented the most graphic portrayal of the urban crisis of Kolkata city. Housing shortage, at that time, was immense. Then quality of housing was poor on the average. Table-3.3 shows that 18,000 people had no housing at all. These were the pavement dwellers of Kolkata, who formed nearly 1 percent of the population.

Table-3.4. Housing Supply in Kolkata and KMD, 1961

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Kolkata</th>
<th>KMD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupied Housing Units</td>
<td>584000</td>
<td>1329000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied Rooms</td>
<td>942000</td>
<td>213000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Rooms per Unit</td>
<td>1610</td>
<td>1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Units</td>
<td>25000</td>
<td>60000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CMPO, 1969

Tabl-3.4 illustrates that in 1961 the total population in Kolkata occupied 5, 84,000 housing units, providing on an average, a unit for every 4.51 persons. Though this ratio was not particularly high, the real problem was that most of the units were extremely small in relation to the number of people who were forced to live in them.
The overcrowding is evident in Table 3.5. The average KMD housing unit size was only 1.55 rooms and was 1.61 for Kolkata, the average occupancy rate was 2.99 persons per room in KMD and 2.80 in Kolkata. It was estimated that 77 percent of all Kolkata families in 1957 had less than 40 sq. ft. of living space per persons.

The housing problem was not limited to the low-income families only. According to a survey under guidance of Prof. S.N. Sen of the University of Calcutta in 1957-1958 only one fifth of the households with incomes between Rs.200 and Rs750 per month own their own house, and 60 percent of the household in higher income group (over Rs.750 per month) live in rented flats. Only about 7.2 percent of all households in Kolkata own the houses in which they live. The outward movement of MIG people was expected to leave more space for those (LIGs) remaining in the central areas acting to lower house rents.

3.8.2. New Construction, 1961-1966:

Kolkata had experienced a very active construction rate in early 1960’s. Two Government agencies were directly involved in construction of flats for the Bustee dwellers, namely KIT and Housing Directorate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>No. of flats completed</th>
<th>Total (completed, under construction or projected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KIT</td>
<td>4588</td>
<td>7742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Directorate</td>
<td>1592</td>
<td>1592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6180</td>
<td>9334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CMPO, 1969

Table 3.7 suggests a comparison between the Pucca and Kutcha housing units in different parts of Kolkata in 1961 and that in 1966. Dalhousie, Shyampukur and
Muchipara showed fewer than 10 percent of Kutcha houses suggesting better housing conditions in 1961, which they maintained in 1966 also. Particularly in case of Dalhousie and generally for all three areas, this may be result of the long history of settlement and predominance of commercial structures. Areas like Topsia and Tangra in east Kolkata had substantially high proportion of Kutcha housing units (close to 65 percent). The probable cause behind this is likely to be the temporary status of housing infrastructure around the leather tanning industries and refugee settlements. The data shows that the total number of pucca stories added over 1961-66 represented 7.7 percent of the 1961 total. Applying this rate to the 1961 stock of pucca units in Corporation implies the production of 33600 new units over the period.

**Table-3.7. Percentage of Housing Stock in Different Sub-areas of Kolkata Corporation, 1961 and 1966**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cossipur</td>
<td>78.59873</td>
<td>21.40127</td>
<td>76.75941</td>
<td>23.24059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgachhia</td>
<td>82.25957</td>
<td>17.74043</td>
<td>82.3973</td>
<td>17.6027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandpur</td>
<td>36.75792</td>
<td>63.24208</td>
<td>37.74455</td>
<td>62.25545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrakpur</td>
<td>20.65257</td>
<td>79.34743</td>
<td>22.18434</td>
<td>77.81566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhakuria</td>
<td>50.6096</td>
<td>49.3904</td>
<td>53.85957</td>
<td>46.14043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topsia</td>
<td>35.88543</td>
<td>64.11457</td>
<td>34.50688</td>
<td>65.49312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manicktala</td>
<td>59.55645</td>
<td>40.44355</td>
<td>57.40609</td>
<td>42.59391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliaghata</td>
<td>66.46623</td>
<td>33.53377</td>
<td>66.30661</td>
<td>33.69339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangra</td>
<td>36.47199</td>
<td>63.52801</td>
<td>36.79039</td>
<td>63.20961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alipore</td>
<td>74.78673</td>
<td>25.21327</td>
<td>73.48979</td>
<td>26.51021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekbalpur</td>
<td>69.80568</td>
<td>30.19432</td>
<td>67.41041</td>
<td>32.58959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidderpore</td>
<td>75.14451</td>
<td>24.85549</td>
<td>73.87141</td>
<td>26.12859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalhousie</td>
<td>93.55483</td>
<td>6.445169</td>
<td>92.95521</td>
<td>7.044794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shyampukur</td>
<td>91.90166</td>
<td>8.098337</td>
<td>90.86017</td>
<td>9.139831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muchipara</td>
<td>91.59222</td>
<td>8.407777</td>
<td>91.11774</td>
<td>8.882256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entally</td>
<td>75.84586</td>
<td>24.15414</td>
<td>75.56742</td>
<td>24.43258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Street</td>
<td>89.30868</td>
<td>10.69132</td>
<td>89.44783</td>
<td>10.55217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Circus</td>
<td>83.84413</td>
<td>16.15587</td>
<td>82.97697</td>
<td>17.02303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballyguge</td>
<td>88.92617</td>
<td>11.07383</td>
<td>88.4705</td>
<td>11.5295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalighat</td>
<td>83.26686</td>
<td>16.73314</td>
<td>82.07214</td>
<td>17.92786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>72.5334</strong></td>
<td><strong>27.4666</strong></td>
<td><strong>72.09515</strong></td>
<td><strong>27.90485</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CMPO, 1969

*Background of the Study*
Even after a massive construction of new housing and environmental improvement by KIT the production had been less than that required to accommodate population growth. The number of Kolkata’s household increased by 7000 each year; hence an equivalent number of new buildings was to be built yearly. Assuming that the pucca dwelling house depreciate at about 2 percent per year and that should be replaced, the replacement programme called for 5000 units per year. Whereas, the estimated annual rate of construction was less than 6000 dwelling units. More over if all the slum and Bustee dwellers were to be rehoused over a period of 30 years some 12000 units would have to be built per year. To achieve the above programme at least 24000 dwelling units were required to be built every year in the city of Kolkata as against the estimated 6000. The primary reason behind lower rate of production was the lack of effective demand. There had been very little, if any, increase in per capita real income over the past decade. The cost of living index for Kolkata (1951-52=100) rose from 116 in 1961-62 to 178 in 1968-69. Only the top 7.5 percent could afford a monthly housing payment of more than Rs.150. Yet the economic rent of all new pucca housing produced was greater than Rs.150. Assuming reasonable terms and costs in the 1971 market (land at Rs.4000/katha, construction at Rs.28 per sq ft, loan for 10 years at 10 percent interest, a Rs.1000 down payment) Rs.150 would cover only the debt service payments for a 300 square feet house on a 1 katha plot. Strong constraints prevented the private housing industry from responding sensitively to the existing level of demand. Without substantial institutional change it could not be expected to increase production significantly. The problems behind slow growth rate of public housing were as follows:

- The scarcity and high price of developable land.
- The lack of adequate financing.
- The remarkable complexities of land assembly and developable land.
- The high cost and uneven quality of many construction materials and the shortage of particularly steel and cement.
- The generally inefficient, organisation and management of the industry itself and its reliance on traditional construction practice.

Keeping all the above-mentioned problems and housing condition in mind a Housing Policy was prepared for the Kolkata Metropolitan District, as one of the prime objectives.

3.8.3. The New Housing Strategy and Programme, 1966-1986:

- Economic development was considered to be the predominant investment priority. But the improvement of housing conditions was not to be allowed to lag too far behind.

- Slum Improvement and Slum Clearance, regulated by the Calcutta Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers Act (West Bengal Act XX of 1958) was proposed by CMPO. Slum Improvement programme consisted of the installation of basic sewer and water lines and the provision of water stand pipes and sanitary latrines and baths. Preliminary estimates showed that at an expenditure of one crore rupees it was possible to improve the living conditions of 73000 slum dwellers. Where as, the same expenditure for new housing would accommodate only 7000 slum dwellers. But Slum Improvement was not enough to change social habits in compatible with group living in urban environment. Such programmes needed tenant collaboration on building maintenance, clean up and beautification of grounds, stimulation of community services such as schools, meeting halls and health care facilities. Ways and means of self-help activities and of coordinating social management with Slum Improvement were also being invested. Such programmes were planned to be executed in Manicktala, Beliaputra, Tiljala-Tangra, Khidderpore, Chetla.

- Establishment of Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA or erstwhile CMDA). It was supposed to take the leading role in large scale housing production programme during the fourth plan period. The major emphasis in this programme was the provision of hire purchase housing on a low subsidy basis for middle and low-income groups. The techniques required for this are as follows:

  1. To take advantage of economies of scale in land development and Institute cost savings in housing production by the following means:

     a. **Multi-storied apartments-“Own-Your-Own Flat” scheme**: To provide living space in central Kolkata high-rise structures were essential because of its high cost of land and scarcity, providing parking space and other neighbourhood facilities and also considering dependence of LIG and MIG on public transportation. The size of
flat varied from 520 sq. ft. to 1400 sq. ft. and cost varied from Rs.10000 to Rs.30000 per flat including the cost of land.

b. **Core and row housing:** The most economical plan thus far designed is the core house. These houses designed on one-katha plot, suitable for satellite town outside the central city. On the other hand, row housing was planned for building in continuous row with common or party walls. Each row house was completely self-contained with all the facilities designed on 1.5 to 3 katha plot.

c. **Manicktala Work-Cum-living Project:** The ineffective conventional Slum Clearance and rehousing in past led the planners of CMPO to plan an experimental project for a combined work and living centre along with a neighbourhood pattern. A project of 130 lakhs on 10.8-acre plot in Manicktala, developed by KIT, would rehouse 794 slum dwelling families, 175 LIG and 100 MIG families on an “Own-Your-Own flat basis”. In addition provision was made for small and medium scale industries, shops and office space, employing some 1200 earners. Community facilities such as, school, recreation and communication center were also included. Each LIG flat was designed to have 400 sq ft of carpet area at a cost of Rs.14000. These were offered on an initial payment of Rs.2900 and a monthly installment of about Rs.80 per month for 20 years. At the same time, each MIG flat with a carpet area of 1000 sq. ft. was offered at a cost of about Rs.28000 on an initial payment of Rs.8000 and monthly installment of about of Rs.145 for 20 years. If offered on rental basis Rs.160 was to be charged.

II. To ensure a flow of mortgage funds from the Life Insurance Corporation and the Central Housing and Urban Development Finance Corporation at much more reasonable terms than were available in market.

III. To use aggressive marketing efforts to disseminate information about the availability of mortgage loans to eligible families, build model houses in new areas, and generally increase publicity of the programme.

- Development of new areas for new housing construction were expected to reduce land shortage, would act to depress land prices, making houses more accessible to
middle income families by providing low cost mass construction of houses with necessary amenities. A large-scale programme of subsidised public housing was impractical due to shortage of fund. Therefore the housing problem demanded some self-financing from the consumers. At the same time provision of subsidised transportation facilities from and to newly developed outlying areas were considered. Priority was given to already developed lands for residential use by public agencies in past few years. Such as Kalyani, Salt Lake etc. These were Kalidaha, Baishnabghata and Rajarhat. Second priority was given to land in already built-up sections which was under utilised. These were suited for “In-Fill” housing programme specially the Industrial Workers Housing Scheme. Lastly, several land development schemes planned by the State Housing Department were also pursued.

3.9. Conclusion:

In conclusion, it is noted that the apathy, indifference and colonial outlook of the British Government to the problem of congestion and its disregard to the significance of town planning are primarily responsible for a housing disaster. As early as 1897, a Commission was appointed to evolve ways and means of reducing pressure on congested areas. The Anglo-Indian Association also repeatedly demanded a solution to this problem. But no fundamental changes had occurred. Moreover West Bengal famine 1943 and economic recession 1944 made a bad situation worse. Due to political turbulences the Corporation also failed to provide urban infrastructure. These conditions continued after independence in 1947. Conditions were worsening in 1950s. Kolkata experienced a bad cholera epidemic in 1958. Population pressure continued with rural urban migration and natural increase within Kolkata. These were accentuated further by an influx of refugees. Thus limited housing opportunities in Kolkata are due to two factors—uncontrolled population growth and lack of urban planning.
Selected References:

Books and Journals:

- Government of West Bengal (1969): Papers on Housing, CMPO, Calcutta

News Papers:

- Times of India, 31.01.2006, Kolkata