

## Queen of Hills Living on the Edge: Roadmap to Recovery from Cliff like Situations Engulfing Darjeeling

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**Abstract** – An inclusive development is something which ensures a country’s prosperity in the most holistic ways. The term ‘Holistic’ is indicative of simultaneous growth of all stake holders which play their role in terms of socio economic contribution of the nation. Darjeeling, one of the oldest and perhaps the most favoured tourist destinations in the north east has been witnessing bitter situations as an outcome of some haphazard and unmonitored development. Blatant flouting of building rules, rampant, unregulated and mindless construction is surely indicative of some major disaster waiting to happen. The population density in many pockets of the town is much more than the prescribed mark and has already created a catastrophic situation. Further being on a seismic zone - has already created a high risk situation for certain settlements. The town area is largely a tourist centric place and the challenges created by different segments especially related to socio economic structure is getting tougher by the day. This is also having an adverse impact on the environment of this beautiful place. Modernization and urbanization is indicative of prosperity any system thrives for but if that comes with a high price - needs to be cordially settled. A sensitive planning process and administrative policies amidst the constraints holds the key. This paper will try to infer a correct picture with respect to the above concerns and will try to seek some amicable solutions to retain the traditional fabric of the district and ensure a revival of the loosing identity of the place.

**Keywords:** Darjeeling, Holistic, Modernization, Tourist Destination, Sustainability.

### I. INTRODUCING DARJEELING

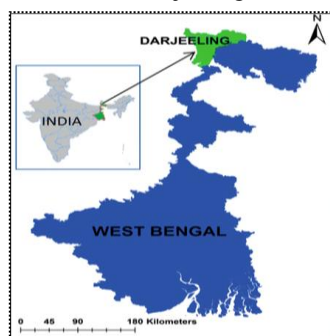
Darjeeling, one of the oldest and perhaps the most favoured tourist destinations in the north east means – ‘Abode of God’. Enveloped in captivating natural beauty and nestled amidst the rolling Himalayan ranges, the beauty of Darjeeling is beyond description and rightly called as - ‘Queen of the Hills’ (See Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Darjeeling - ‘Queen of the Hills’.



Source – Google image

Figure 2 – Location of Darjeeling.



Source – Google image

Darjeeling is known for its strategic location (See Figure 2). The Himalayan ranges, the rich flora and fauna, the tea gardens and the chilled weather makes it irresistible and it remains in the wish list of every tourist. The normal temperature in the winter months ranges from 1 degree to 6 degree C and it remains quite pleasant and cold all through the year. Darjeeling gives a spectacular view of the world's third highest mountain peak, the Kanchenjunga. The view of Mt Everest from the adjacent Tiger hills is a lifetime experience. The Rangit Valley Ropeway – is one of the longest ropeways in the country - a ride from this ropeway takes to the Tiger Hill as one enjoys the beauty of sunrise over the Himalayas. Darjeeling is also a paradise for trekkers. So the tourism advantage that the place has augurs well for the socio economic build up but eventually projects issues if they are not dealt properly.

The town which is still a favorite summer destination of tourists has been amidst threats – from multiple quarters. The caution buttons are getting pressed and the panic buttons are not far if immediate measures are not taken. The place has seen a stiff growth of economy in the past 10 years. It's definitely a booster as this generates business, provides employment, promotes traditional works, boosts culture and subsequently improves the socio economic scenario. But that came with some major price that this beautiful town had to pay for in the process. The concerns have put Darjeeling on the back foot on many aspects and the situation has reached much to a point of concern.

Following pictures does a pictorial documentation of the places as seen from almost the same place after three decades (See Figure 3). These pictures are testimony of the transition that this beautiful hill town went through. The greenery and the softness of the place has gradually been taken over by hard surfaces and built forms. The streets, the squares, the mountains and the tourist centric activities don't look the same as these used to look 30 years back.

Figure 3 – Urban transformation of Darjeeling since 1990 and present – Then & Now



Source – Primary studies (right) and secondary sources (left)

### Aim

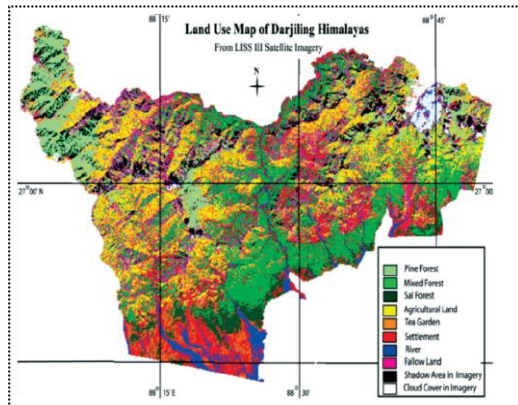
This paper will overview and document the concerning present day situations in Darjeeling with respect to the economic variables, social co-existence, traditional livelihood and age old emotions attached with the place to delineate some feasible way outs keeping a rationale between all stakeholders in the process.

### Earthquake and Seismic Issue

Darjeeling is in Zone IV or 'high-damage risk' area of earthquakes. The mapped areas show the comparative risk levels of the densely populated areas of Darjeeling (See Figure 4). Intensities are based on high, moderate and low risk zones accordingly. Studies indicate that high risk spots will turn to rubble

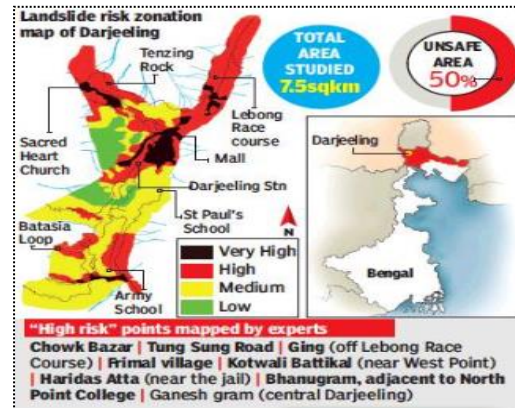
even if a medium intensity earthquake strikes. The density in some places is in excess of 50,000 people per square kilometer which is highly alarming. Vulnerability of Darjeeling of being on the seismic belt surely demands for some stricter vigilance and careful interventions by the government (See Figure 5).

Figure 4 – Land use map of Darjeeling – LISS III image.



Source – Google image

Figure 5 – Map depicting high risk landslide zones within Darjeeling.



Source – Times News Network

## Objectives

- To provide the insight story of Darjeeling – its features at source and embellished both that seals the deal to make Darjeeling the Queen of Hills.
- To capture the present day pointers which have resulted in the vulnerability Darjeeling is forced upon – the resultant backlash when all ends don't meet.
- To frame relevant observations in lieu with allied stakeholders that may help Darjeeling rewrite its tale of vigor by retaining its glory and serenity.

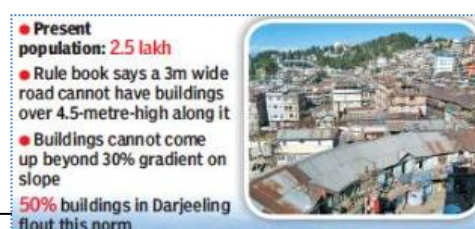
## II. METHODOLOGIES

- **Phase I: Initial Works** - Includes secondary studies of aspects related with literature information in terms of history, growth and emergence of Darjeeling. Reviewing published works, the government annual reports and media updates were thoroughly followed and evaluated during the next phase of study.
- **Phase II: Intermediate Works** - Includes physical introspection of ground level situation. Tallying of the information gathered in first phase of the study and understanding the transition that puts up this sorry picture. Also behavioural pattern of the market areas, the spatial hierarchy was closely observed.
- **Phase III: Final Works** – Assessment of the data, information and feedback collected from both primary and secondary efforts. A discussion to delineate some effective way outs keeping in mind the sentiments of all the stakeholders in the process. An holistic balance was observed while modelling the proposals.

## Present Day Situations

The urbanization and population expansion has its adverse impact on the socio economic strata of the town area. Darjeeling has been witnessed to a growth with which came its own set of problems. A day of stay here with a little qualitative measurement gives an impression that the 'Queen of Hills' is staring at a major disaster waiting to happen. Following are some overviews of the key concerns that make Darjeeling vulnerable and these needs to be accepted, understood, respected and addressed.

Figure 6 – Darjeeling Building Rules.



Source – Times of India (E-newspaper).

**Flouting Building Rules** – Building rules are flouted at will which is evident from a mere look once one steps out of the vehicle upon reaching Darjeeling. Not only that unplanned growth is making the town unsafe but it has also taken away the visual serenity that one use to associate the place with. The rule book says no building should be over 4.5 meters (one-and-a-half storey) high on 3m wide roads. Buildings as high as eight storeys (24 meters) have come up along them (See Figure 6). Further, buildings on slopes with gradients over 30 degrees are not allowed. However, multistoried buildings have come up on slopes with gradients between 45 degrees and 60 degrees in Darjeeling. Activities like construction of roads, dams, and unplanned buildings have further aggravated the situation. The pictures below (See Figure 7) give us an idea of densely populated buildings in neighborhoods and market areas of Darjeeling.

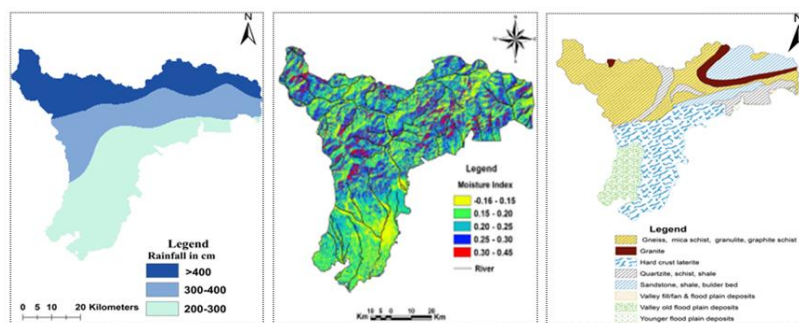
Figure 7 – Densely populated neighbourhoods and market areas of Darjeeling.



Source – Primary studies

**Playing on Steep Slopes** – Lack of proper surveillance allows construction undertaken in slopes steeper than 30 degrees without maintaining any basic recommended construction parameters. The steep slopes and loose soil makes the area prone to environmental hazards like soil erosion and landslides. Soil fertility is reduced due to frequent topsoil erosion. Further, massive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in the past has reduced topsoil quality and fertility of the region.

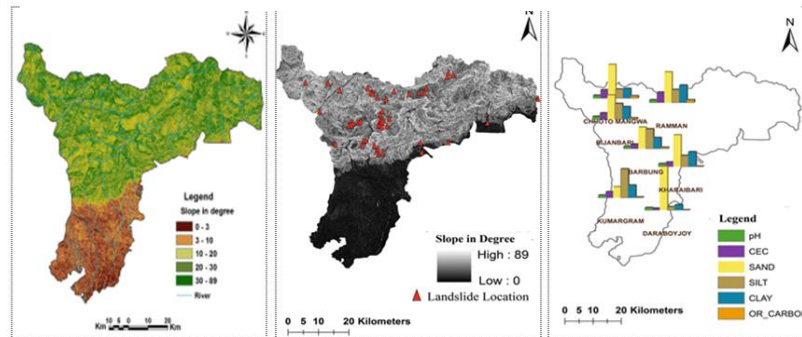
Figure 8 – Map showing the areas of rainfall intensity, moisture content and soil strata of Darjeeling.



Source – Google images

Traditionally hills are prone to landslides and Darjeeling is no different. The town is exposed to this hazardous disaster whenever exposed to heavy or torrential rains. Landslide causes substantial loss of tourism revenues and is a problem for its national security as well. The mapping (See Figure 8 & 9) shows the respective variables based on which measures needs to be taken to protect from any untoward incident happening due to construction in steep slopes. Factors like – regional rainfall, moisture content of the soil, type of soil in the respective areas, low, moderate and high slope areas and soil constituents are some of the important consideration to decide as on to what extent settlements can be allowed in the slopes of hills in Darjeeling.

Figure 9 – Map showing low, moderate and high slope areas & soil constituent's of Darjeeling.



Source – Google images

**Teasing the Environment** – Illegal commercial buildings in town municipal area of Darjeeling have been a typical representation of commercial growth of the area. It has been a serious threat to environment and human safety of the region and a concerning issue for the hill administration. The place being a tourist spot of substantial recognition compounds the problem.

A lame eye from the administrative perspective could not be denied in this aspect. Two buildings coming next to the bungalow of city SP exposes the vulnerability of municipal powers. A sprawling Dhaba near a public plaza, a G+6 near the telephone exchange building, hotels in PWD land kept for expansion of medical officers quarters are a few examples that one comes across while taking a stroll of the town area (See Figure 10). Municipal sanctions of a maximum of 11.5m of buildings are seen randomly flouted. The following pictures further observes how Darjeeling was witness to calamities like fire, earthquake and landslides pointing to both manmade and natural vulnerabilities of the place –

Figure 10 – Natural calamities like fire, earthquake, erosion and landslides that struck Darjeeling.



Source – Google images

**Living Dangerously** – There were hanging spaces created over streams without proper support. Multi-storied buildings have been constructed on steep slopes without foundation and some houses are seen sitting on the ground. Needless to say perhaps that owner could not show any soil test done, nor did they consent to our query of adequate digging for a firm foundation and no evidence of precautionary techniques like combined columns for weight distribution. Builders have used cantilevers, stilts and concrete pillars for construction but they are certainly not safe considering the seismic zone the town falls under. The columns in the buildings were found were standard or without being building or site specific. Shortage of land in town area has prompted buildings to come up in vertical wooden slits. This has projected the urban area to a slum like situation. The following pictures (See Figure 11) scares as how dangerously the people of Darjeeling have been living, how casual the administration have been in ignoring the casualty anticipated –

Figure 11 – Dangerously built dwelling units in town areas of Darjeeling.



Source – Primary studies

**Man Made Mayhems** – Darjeeling is passing through a phase where immediate administrative interventions are needed in order to counter both the social and environmental degradation. The sign of wear and tear the town is showing is sufficient to take some absolute measures -

Figure 12 – Darjeeling’s population growth.



Source – Google image

**Unregulated Population** – The pattern of livelihood in the town area has changed considerably over the years. Youths are exploring options other than tea cultivation or agriculture and this has led to an all time high rural to urban migration. The town area shows the growth rate and density of population increased many folds over the past ten years (See Figure 12). This has also opened up concerns like air, water and sound pollution. This has also put pressure on existing infrastructure especially in this case where proper planning policies are not in place. Unauthorized and unmindful commercial establishments and activities, unregulated roadside parking, innumerable street side hawkers create a ruckus everyday and is a regular event in the core town areas. The AQI and WQI have reasonably gone up than the specified range.

**Mindless Deforestation** – When survival becomes the key – cities go for numerous compromises. Demand for fuel wood and local timber to build houses stands on the higher side. This has led to mindless deforestation which hampered the environmental balance (See Figure 13). Cattle grazing and felling of trees for commercial purposes have led to rapid depletion of forest cover and reduced in the productivity of land which had a telling effect on the existing economy. Decrease in traditional agriculture practices have led to exposure of the



Figure 13 – Deforestation in Darjeeling.

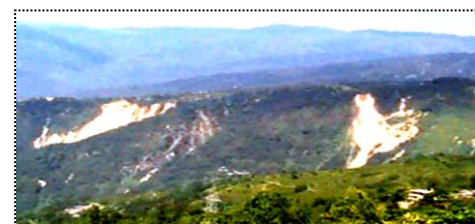


Source – Google image

Figure 14 – Inviting floods.

soil-cover leading to accelerated erosion of both soil and forest cover.

**Inviting Floods** - With the depletion of forests in hill areas, flooding has increased during the rainy season and extended periods of drought have become a recurring feature in the plains, particularly in North Bengal (See Figure 14). Availability of water in hill areas has also suffered due to lower water



Source – Google image

retention capacity caused by the loss of forest cover. This has led to the problems of sand-casting of fertile plains and silting of harbors, reservoirs and river beds, besides additional hardship for hill people.

**Dreaded Disposal System** – In Darjeeling, distribution of built up areas should depend on the intensity and effect of various parameters like rainfall, soil crust / earth layers and slope. Depending on these criteria, the drainage pattern, pipe lines, sewage disposal system, placement of sewerage treatment plants holds important. Being a tourist centric place and with such high density of buildings and people, the garbage disposal mechanism surely should be systematic and in best of shape. Lack of waste management is evident (See Figure 15). A few observations below give us an unfortunate picture of the existing scenario.

Figure 15 – Unhealthy and disorganized garbage disposals in Darjeeling.



Source – Primary studies

**Socio Economic Aspects** – Darjeeling has its own set of identity which needs to be looked upon with utmost care and sensitivity so that the progression remains in a balance. Economic development is something which automatically ensures a sense of security on the people. Increase in income from these sectors will only bring the youth back to the roots and reduce the load on city centric activities. Following is a brief overview of the traditional activities Darjeeling is known for -

**Agriculture at base** - Though agriculture in this region is grossly rain dependent but most of it is done in sloped lands of a minimum 8% - 40% slope where surface drainage is rapid. Soil in general is shallow, high in organic matter and susceptible to erosion. The rainfall pattern is uneven distributed over the year and cultivation in drier months is limited to small patches. So the farmers face surplus water in monsoon months and a scarcity from February to May. These conditions makes cultivation challenging and necessitate aggressive intervention in conserving the topsoil during monsoon and harvesting lifesaving irrigation water for the dry months. Besides tea, the most widely cultivated crops include maize, millets, paddy, cardamom, potato and ginger.

**Relevance of Livestocks** – Animal husbandry and domestication contribute for 25% of Gross National Income and plays an important role to uplift any rural economy. Sector like animal resource holds its importance in economic growth for a place like Darjeeling which is largely tourist centric. A more organized approach to the sector can easily encourage the rural poor, marginal destitute or unemployed youth to realize and cash on the opportunities that this sector opens up. This also augurs well for an eco-friendly socio economic growth and this also calls for being sustainable and reduce dependency on external agencies. Further processing of cocoons at local level will ensure high value addition thereby increasing its acceptability amongst small farmers.

**Potential of Horticulture** - Agriculture with high investment cost does not assure an even return throughout the year. To mend with uneven and imbalanced – encouraging horticulture and floriculture is important. Fruits like orange; plum, pears and peach are traditionally grown in the hills of Darjeeling and this deserves encouragement. Further, fruit cultivation comes as natural passion for the hill tribes and this should be cashed on by ensuring them proper returns. There are also substantial areas growing banana, pineapple, guava and so on. Products Orange Squash, Orange Marmalade, Mulberry, Tomato Sauce, Vinegar, Juice, Pineapple rings, frozen fruits and pickle are made but should be encouraged to generate local business and export as well.

**Pharmaceuticals from Flora** - Darjeeling has the potential to come up as one of the most promising area for production of photochemical and pharmaceutical products. Apart from the present exploitation of Cinchona bark for quinine and ipecac root for emetine, many items where herbal oils can be prepared are



identified which puts Darjeeling in good fortune. Also Tissue culture cultivation has tremendous prospects.

**Skill Based Industries** – Local village arts and crafts artists makes exquisite ornaments, carpets, household products, handloom oriented articles which has wide demand. The traditional cottage industries (See Figure 16) are known for the woolen garments. They need to be properly encouraged for more market valuation. Also cane and bamboo work along with handicraft industries needs proper business channels and platforms in terms of having exhibitions in support of society and guilds.

Figure 16 – The traditional cottage industries of Darjeeling exhibiting local arts and crafts.



Source – Google images

**Darjeeling and Tourism** - The most significant contributor to Darjeeling’s economy, image and changed scenario will always be accredited to the Tourism industry. Darjeeling receives approximately 5 lakh tourist annually that generates more than 30% of its total revenue that amounts to more than Rs 350 crore per annum. From generating allied areas of economic activities to self employment to generating foreign revenues - its impact is multifaceted. But this is not only making the town clumsy and claustrophobic but also survival risky due to its geographical limitations. It even puts the available infrastructure like potable drinking water, power, municipal services, public transport and accommodation under tremendous pressure in peak seasons (See Figure 17). Other factor that drives the new generation towards tourism as means of sustenance is easy and quick money. The system has lot of sub systems and activities have lots of sub activities which are mostly not recognized or ignored at the administrative level. There are middleman’s operating virtually in all allied activities like lodging,

Figure 17 – Tourism Industry – the major factor affecting Darjeeling’s image and situation.



Source – Primary studies

transport or shopping which don’t follow a fixed rule. They are also not dependent on permission, license or do they give any receipt copy of their work done. They further have supports from the local unions and clubs who are affiliated to various political outfits. This makes the situation further complex to handle and the decision making bodies see the decisions never getting implemented. As a result, one can also see many hotels, tourist lodges, restaurants, eateries, travel agents, public vehicles, guides, vendors etc operating at will without having a proper permit.

**Darjeeling and Tea** - The Darjeeling Tea industry is the mainstay of the economy. The product that takes Darjeeling way ahead and most distinguished is Tea. There are a total of 78 tea estates in the hills which have been accorded the status for its produce, as Darjeeling Tea by the Tea Board of India. These estates cover

Figure 18 – Darjeeling’s Tea Estate.



Source – Primary study

over 17,500 hectares producing over 9 million kg of tea engaging about 50 percent people of the district. Tea gave Darjeeling a worldwide recognition – an attribute to its geographical location. Darjeeling produces the finest quality tea in the world fetching the highest price. There are close to 90 tea estates covering around 20000 hectares of area - Commercial tea production has been the mainstay of livelihoods and economy in the Darjeeling hills for over 150 years (See Figure 18). Development of social infrastructures like its roads and railways developed only by virtue of cultivation of tea in this region and tourism actually followed after that. Tea industry has been the pivot behind socio-economic lives of people of the region. Apart from providing direct employment to thousands, many ancillary jobs like packaging, transport and other tea-related trades. Last two decades however saw a decline in the trade. Stiff international competition, decrease in new generations for the job, rising labor costs have affected tea production in the region. The veterans argue that a daily wage of a meager amount of Rs176/- per day does not attract the youngsters. They prefer to work at a construction site that pays not less than Rs350/- a day – or for that matter choose some other profession for livelihood.

### Other Industries –

- Darjeeling has around 39% of its area under forest which comes as 1204 sq.km. Many forest-based industries have come up and there is huge potential for providing excellent opportunity for setting up of industries for manufacture of plywood, veneer, particle board from wood dust, wooden furniture, wood charcoal, cane furniture etc. further development.
- Forestry products like Cinchona introduced in 1861 and other medicinal plants have its base here. Its large-scale production started from 1887.
- Sericulture is another section, which has been spreading with time. The best of Indian quality mulberry silk is being produced in Darjeeling hills.
- Darjeeling district also has ideal conditions for rubber plantation. Setting up of a rubber unit having its own rubber plantation will also encourage the small farmers of surrounding area to take up this activity and sell the rubber milk to the rubber unit.
- Huge cattle population in Darjeeling provides an opportunity for a systematic approach for collection and processing of milk. Hides and skins, which are easily available, can be used to promote leather industry.
- Handicrafts based leather products exploiting traditional expertise have ready market due to tourist traffic large urban population also provides opportunity for promotion of other animal resource based activities like poultry, goats etc.

### Media Studies

Figure 19 – Challenges faced by the Queen of Hills - Darjeeling.



Source –The Telegraph & Times News Network (Print and online).

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS: ROADMAPS TOWARDS RECOVERY

A place which has traditionally marked its existence with so many stakeholders making their presence felt – surely needs to be sensitively dealt in all its aspects. The changes which lead to such an unprecedented and alarming situation of this beautiful hill town was not instant and has happened over a reasonable period of time. For some large scale policies to get implemented – further sub policies are required by micro level interventions. To see this executed, intermediate interface are important i.e., to make people aware of the outcomes and justifying an alternate way. Following recommendations are findings based on evaluation of both primary and secondary information.

1. **Town Area Expansion** – The rural to town migration of the people in search of better opportunities cannot be denied but this progression has to be sensibly countered. Expansion of the town area is one of the key interventions in order to disperse the population density. Once the town area is increased, the centralized congestion gets released. This also needs to be done by widening all necessary socio economic activities with supporting infrastructures. The urban sprawl will automatically ease out the concentration from core areas.
2. **Local Awareness** – Government public service outfits along with voluntary and non-government organizations which works directly for and with the public holds key to run regular awareness workshops and campaigns. Merits and demerits of eroding the natural structure of the place has to be made understood. Alarming consequences associated with such mindless growth misbalancing the nature has to be realized by the local people. Examples like the Uttarakhand landslides should be cited.
3. **Micro level Interventions** – Bodies to perform SWOT analysis of any major developments that have taken place. The process of monitoring and evaluation of the effects and impacts of any major developments that have taken place over the past 10 years or so can be done in the core government level or may be outsourced to organizations who does so. The SWOT analysis helps to draw a precise roadmap addressing the areas of concern and addressal. The deficiencies have to be rigorously documented as a measure to way forward.
4. **Addressing Sewage Disposal** – The local municipality should immediately take calls on appropriate sewage disposal system of the town. The system should be especially aligned and oriented with the hotels, tourist lodges and all tourist centric commercial spaces in Darjeeling as these areas generates more wastes. There should be earmarked areas and colored bins for collection and quick segregation of wastes in all convenient pockets of the commercial areas.
5. **Falling back to Tea** – Tea is integral to Darjeeling - something for which the place is inherently famous for. Products like natural caffeine are also produced from tea wastes, which can be encouraged for commercial exploitation. But the fact remains – that its commercialization part often poses a threat for other issues like degrading the quality of agricultural land and cutting of trees. The fact that youth not showing much interest in taking up the profession is a cause of concern. The wages as discussed above are less compared to contemporary professions. Upgrading their daily wage and ensuring a rewarding life to its workers by providing a steady livelihood and other facilities like housing, statutory benefits, allowances, incentives, crèches for infants of working mothers, children's education, integrated medical facilities for the workers and their families is important.
6. **Ecological Balance** – Retention of existing fabric cannot be compromised with – importance of forests and hills within the town area also ensures soil conservation and ecological balance. Factors posing threat or creating an imbalance on the natural structure should be discouraged. Cutting of hills and deforestation should be immediately checked as this also disturbs the rainfall pattern and disrupts the holding and bearing capacity of the soil. The forest department should be instrumental in ensuring the same.
7. **Recognitions and Platforms** – Hilly areas are always associated with its own set of identities in terms of its culture. Local arts and crafts are indicative of identity and heritage of the place. This needs to be kept in alignment as part of the policy for any development. Attention needs to be given for the proper production of the local products, channelizing them and giving them the platform to sell them. This should be done in a more structured way – it encourages the locals and apt for tourism.
8. **Holistic Approach** – Expansion with a certain activity won't work in isolation. A holistic approach with consideration of infrastructure will have to be reoriented around the functional hierarchy of that activity is important. Darjeeling and its adjoining settlements should be addressed as a whole. Also planning of taking the best out of these settlements with due regard to the economic roles played by these settlements vis-a-vis their feeder areas needs to be cashed upon.
9. **Educational Interventions** – Addressing the problems at grass root level is one of the fundamental ways to uproot the issues that have cropped up in Darjeeling. Create consciousness while a child grows up – incorporating more local education in the school syllabus, integrate education on conservation of ecology, making them aware of the rich tradition of the place, making them aware of their

responsibilities while they grow up - these in the text book level in the schools can be an important consideration.

10. **Orienting Youths** – One of the key aspects is to arrest the decline of youths refraining from taking the core traditional socio economic activities of the place. As discussed, agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, handlooms, arts and crafts, small scale endeavors etc are very much a part of profession and engagements of the people here. They should be thoroughly encouraged and promoted by giving them proper outlets in the city and platforms to sell their products directly without the intervention of middlemen.

11. **Promoting Industries** – Industrial growth sets the economy rolling for any place. Procuring adequate funds at the government level and Setting up agro-based industry around available natural resources can be useful. Subsequent linking by facilitating agro-based industrial loans, supply of improved tools with modern infrastructure can be a tempting incentive. Also support in terms of outsourcing the industrial products will be encouraging. All the points discussed as under socio economic survey are traditional resources which has potential to create a balance. They should be properly addressed so that they provide sufficient returns and in turn stops youths from not taking these traditional professions and bring them back to their traditional roots.

12. **Existing Biodiversity** – Geographically Darjeeling is blessed with resources that are self supportive. Existing stocks to be taken care of with good agricultural practices. Natural settings like slope of the land and soil conditions should be cashed upon. Conventional organic production to be in tune with the requirements and facilitate local farming and reduce applications of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

#### IV. CONCLUDING DISCUSSIONS

The outer skull of Darjeeling, the town does not portray the actual face of the socio economic structure of Darjeeling, the district. Micro level interventions at the adjoining hilly and rural villages have put the real situation forward in this paper. Easy and lucrative career prospect like cashing on tourism poured as an attraction for the youth in Darjeeling. There has also been this tendency of looking down of the traditional profession like tea cultivation. The administration should find amicable ways to deal with this. The traditional advantages those persist should be cashed upon with more inclusive approach. The reason that drives the young rural population to the town area for better opportunities and livelihood needs to be addressed at the ground zero level. From ages, the economy of Darjeeling is dictated by tea and tourism. Combined these two generates a hopping Rs 1000 crore revenue annually. Earlier timber had a major contribution but with stricter rules its importance has waned. Also, Tourism is the sole dictator of the change in socio economic infrastructure of the region but a strong appropriate administrative mandate to make the town more serene and livable. These two along with all other traditional ways of sustenance as discussed in the paper points out to the much needed way outs to ease the crisis faced in the town areas. Administrative interventions which include a detailed inclusive planning will constitute feasible and viable roadmaps to recovery. The long-run needs both for the nation and the community will be served only by maintaining an ecological equilibrium. The major challenge, therefore, is to devise a solution to the problem that will avert ecological disaster while meeting the requirements of the growing population. The motto is to uphold the profit in the manifold socio-economic fabric. Our diversity needs to be cherished in terms of our communities, traditions, culture and socio-economic patterns.

*Smart living is always about smart thinking – And smart thinking is well planned, well executed, self sustainable and futuristic. It's always decorated with theories where all its stakeholders enjoy the benefit being a part of the process and sustain by mutually supporting each other.*

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*Note: Pictures are from primary and secondary studies - both case specific and as per relevancy of the study.*