

**ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK OF DARJEELING DISTRICT****SATYENDRA KUMAR SINGH**

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Under the economic framework of the district are included nature of economy, agricultural economy, crops and their distribution, non- agricultural economy, i.e. industries, tourism and plantation economy. Since the study area encompasses a large part of lower Himalayan region and a small share of plains of Tarai region, the economic base of the area largely differs from that of the other plains of the country.

**(A) Nature of Economy :**

Economy of an area largely rests with physical and partly with social and political environments that prevail over the area. Since the Darjeeling district constitutes its large part of hilly areas of lower Himalayas and a small part of plains of Tarai. Its economy is vitally in tune with the mountainous environment. Notwithstanding, the economic activities are the reflection of economy of area, therefore, the activities i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary, have large impact on economic development of the area. The district largely bases on agriculture, plantation cultivation, forests and tourism. Under the agriculture pursuits dominate the rice cultivation, under plantation comes tea and cinchona cultivation, under forestry comes lumber industry and tourism gets an important place in the economy of the district. Altogether, the principal economy of Darjeeling Hill area depends on tea production and forestry, and the southern plains economy is dominated by cultivation of various crops.

**(B) Land Use and Agriculture:**

Land use includes all those uses of surface land that are engaged in different aspects of natural and human interests. Agriculture includes the most important aspects of land uses which encompass large area for human benefits. As regards the land use position in the district of Darjeeling, it consists of a large area under forests (38.08%), Whereas other uses are below the forest cover. (4.1)

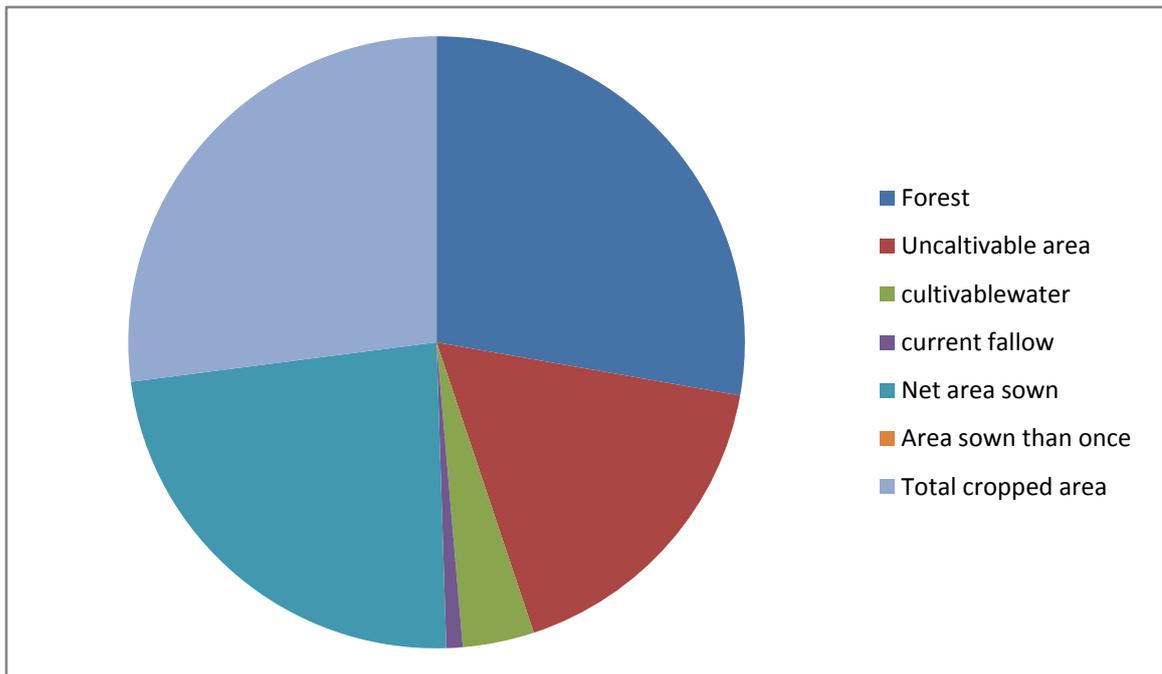
Table – 4.1

**Use in the Darjeeling district Land**

<b>1. Forest-----</b>	<b>38.08%</b>
<b>2. Uncultivable area----</b>	<b>23.45%</b>
<b>3. Cultivable water-----</b>	<b>5.14%</b>
<b>4. Current fallow-----</b>	<b>1.17%</b>
<b>5. Net Area sown-----</b>	<b>32.13%</b>
<b>6. Area sown more</b>	
<b>then once -----</b>	<b>4.96%</b>
<b>7. Total cropped area-----</b>	<b>37.09%</b>

Agricultural pursuits in the district are guided by the varied physical conditions which make cultivation extremely diverse. The district may broadly be divided into two parts; the northern mountainous and the southern alluvial plain region. Both the regions observe agricultural pursuits differently as the northern pursuits differently as the northern part contains elevation up to 12,000 feet (3650m), while southern plain, the Tari, contains elevation up to 300 feet (920m).

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The southern plan at the foot of the hills encompasses alluvial soil suited particularly for rice cultivation. On the other hand, the northern hilly parts contain forested areas and much of the land under different uses shows only 37.09% under cropped area and rest part is either forested or unsuitable for cultivation.

(A)Rice cultivation includes two types of rice Farming----Aman or Haimantik and Aus or Bhadai rice. The Aman rice is sown by broadcast in nurseries and thereafter it is transplanted in other field after uprooting the plants from nurseries. These are grown in plain areas. The aus rice is just broadcast indifferent fields and are left to mature, but weeding is needed at least for twice during the cultivation period. Such rice is grown on higher land and slopes of the hills.

Table—4.2

Rice Cultivation in Darjeeling District

Sl.No.	Aman		Aus		
	Name of Block	Area in 00 hectares	Production in 000 ton	Area in 00 hectares	Production in 000tons
01	Darjeeling pulbazar	7.2	13.2	-----	-----
02	Rangli Rangliot	-----	-----	-----	-----
03	Jone Bunglow sukia pokhari	-----	-----	-----	-----
04	Kalimpong—1	20.3	38.9	-----	-----
05	Kalimpong—2	16.3	32.4	-----	-----
06	Gorubathan	7.5	12.5	-----	-----
07	Kurseong	-----	-----	-----	-----
08	Mirik	-----	-----	-----	-----
09	Matigara	13.2	19.7	4.2	2.1
10	Naxalbari	37.9	69.6	10.0	6.0
11	Khoribari	81.9	117.8	15.2	6.6
12	Phansidewa	104.5	136.8	19.5	1.1
	Total	293.8	440.9	48.9	15.8

(source: Internet)

It is evident from table—4.2 that rice cultivation in the district is mostly concentrated in plain area of Tarai where topographical as well as climatic and soil suitability are available for the farming of this crop. It is also indicated that farming of aman rice extends to the hilly areas of some blocks, whereas cultivation of aus rice absents in hilly areas. It evidences that most of mountain parts are unsuitable for this farming because of forest cover or steep slopes where sufficient water refrains either from natural process or from irrigation to rice cultivation.

(A) Other crops under plantation group includes tea and jute, and under cereal crops include barley, wheat, potato, boro, khesari, masoor, gram, maskalai and under oil seeds include mustard and linseed. All these crops are produced mostly in plain areas, except potato which grow in all area of the district. Jute is a crop that sufficient water at its root hence it is grown in plain areas. Barley and wheat need occasional water in certain period of growth therefore are produced in areas where suitable conditions are available. Both can be grown in plain areas as well as in terraced farms in hilly areas. Potato and boro come under vegetable group of. Potato is grown every where, while boro is restricted to plain region. Khesari, maskalai, masoor, til, mustard and linseed are restricted to plain areas. Table- 4.3 indicates the production of all these crops.

**Table - 4.3**  
**Production of different crops ( area in 100 hectares and production in 000 tons ), 2001**

Sl. No.	Block name	JUTE		BARLEY		WHEAT		POTATO		BORO		KHESARI		MASOOR		MASHALAI		TIL		MUSTARD		LINSEED	
		area	prod	area	prod	area	prod	area	prod	area	prod	area	prod	area	prod	area	prod	area	prod	area	prod	area	prod
1	Darjeeling Pulbazar	---	---	---	---	---	---	8.9	12.4	---	---	---	---	---	---	4.5	0.6	---	---	---	---	---	---
2	Bangli	---	---	---	---	---	---	4.4	73.6	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
3	Jore Bangla Pakha Pakhari	---	---	---	---	---	---	2.3	43.3	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
4	Kalimpang-I	---	---	---	4	0.4	0.9	24.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
5	Kalimpang-II	---	---	---	0.5	0.8	4.3	87	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
6	Gorubathan	---	---	---	3	3.5	2.1	31	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
7	Narsong	---	---	---	---	---	---	4.3	40.5	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
8	Mirik	---	---	---	---	---	---	0.3	4.8	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
9	Margara	1.2	12.7	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.3	4.7	0.1	0.3	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
10	Naxalbari	3.9	18.4	---	---	3	8.2	3.8	30.2	0.8	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
11	Khoribari	8.8	110	---	---	8.8	16.4	3.4	132.2	3.3	8.4	---	---	---	---	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2
12	Phassidawa	12.6	132.6	---	---	8.5	12.1	8.1	144.4	7.4	18	---	---	---	---	0.7	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
	Total	24.3	343	0.2	0.4	20	37.2	43	396.8	12	21	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	2.4	3.7	3.1	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3

(Source: internet)

As regard the population engaged in different agricultural activities in the district , they are classified into main cultivators , marginal cultivators , main agricultural labourers and marginal agricultural labourers . It is important that number of cultivators is high in kalimpong , Darjeeling pulbazar , Gorubathan and Khoribari blocks . It appears that the tea cultivation in hilly area of northern part of the district raises the percentage of cultivators. Table -4.4 mentions the persons engaged in different agricultural activities.

**Table--4.4**  
**Population in Agricultural Activities, 2001**

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Population	Main cultivator	Marginal cultivators	Main Agri. Labourers	Marginal Agri. Labourers	Total Cultivation	Total Agri. Labourers
1	Darjeeling	115837	13253	3615	2156	3045	16868	5201
	Palbazar	percent	11.44	3.12	1.86	2.62	14.56	4.48
2	Rangli Rangliot	64349	2370	1341	2393	1559	3761	3952
		percent	3.68	0.47	3.71	2.42	5.76	6.14
3	Kalimpong-I	67680	9520	3011	1478	2922	12531	4400
		percent	14.06	4.44	2.18	4.31	18.51	6.5
4	Kalimpong-II	606263	8978	3484	1922	2674	12462	4596
		percent	14.89	5.78	3.18	4.43	20.67	7.62
5	Gorubathan	54279	5833	1718	1349	2393	7551	3742
		percent	10.74	3.16	2.48	4.4	13.91	6.89
6	Jore Bungalow	100724	1912	835	1323	1373	2747	2696
	Sukia pokhri	percent	1.89	0.82	1.31	1.36	2.72	2.67
7	Mirik	42237	1984	1164	514	726	3148	1240
		percent	4.69	2.75	1.21	1.71	7.45	2.93
8	Kurseong	85867	2536	1296	1458	865	3832	2323
		percent	2.95	1.51	1.69	1	4.48	2.7
9	Mutigara	129326	2164	276	982	906	2440	1888
		percent	1.607	0.21	0.75	0.7	1.88	1.44
10	Navalbari	144916	3927	267	2099	1862	4194	3961
		percent	2.7	0.18	1.44	1.28	2.89	2.73
11	phansidewa	171508	8734	1058	9367	3862	9792	13229
		percent	5.09	0.61	5.46	2.25	5.71	7.71
12	Khoribari	88230	6830	1358	5933	4658	8188	10591
		percent	7.74	1.58	6.72	5.27	9.28	12
	Total	11,25,215	68041	19423	30974	26845	87464	57819
		percent	6.04	1.72	2.75	2.38	7.77	5.13

**(C)NON-AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY:**

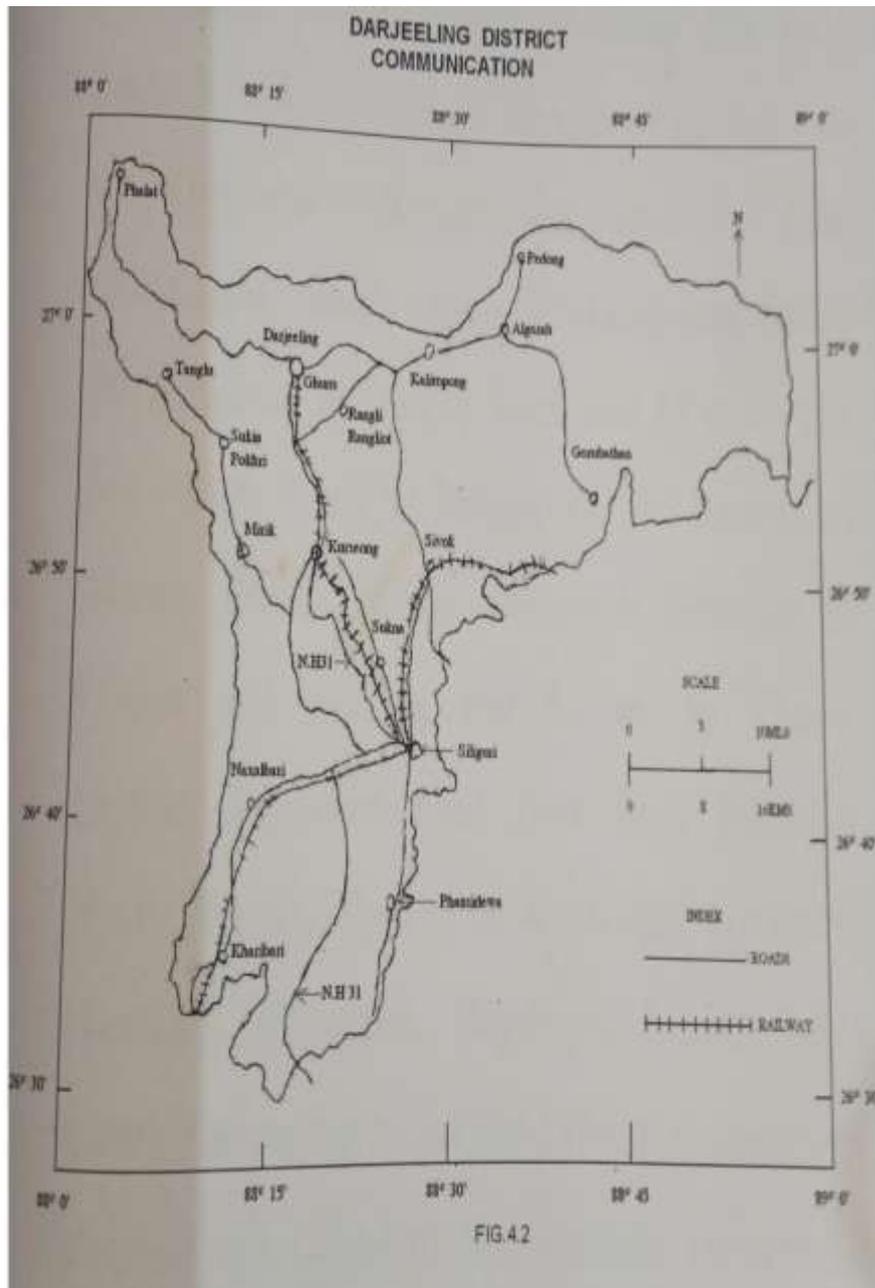
It includes industries and tourism of the district. There is no such work of manufacturing that can be put under industries, except the forest related and the manufacturing of local and traditional implements, particularly for the use of agricultural purposes. Plough, hoe sickles etc. are prepared by the local blacksmiths and are sold in the market. The cloth weaving is another form of cottage industry by Lepcha tribes. The manufacturing of tea and lumber sawing may be regarded important industries, but they have limited areas, particularly on slopes and forested areas.

Tourism has been the main cause of attraction for the area since the early period of the British entrance to the region. The British selected and developed some important areas for tourism and they developed spots of attraction. The construction of rail line gave impetus to

the tourism industry in the Darjeeling district. Besides, certain sights in Himalayan ranges and their splendid views attract tourists. Some sanctuaries were developed for the purpose and now tourism plays an important role to share economy of the district.

**(D)Communication and Transport**

Communication plays a key role to develop an area and its economy. Prior arrival of the British, there were no road to reach the area, except rough and narrow tracks through dense forests. It was Lt. Napier who was deputed to get a road constructed connecting Darjeeling – Siliguri in between 1839-42. This road could not prove sufficient carts and hence another road started to be constructed in 1861 and was completed in 1869. (fig. 4.2)



This road connected Darjeeling – Siliguri via Kurseong and in the most important road in the district which covers 49 miles (79 Km.) distance with an average breadth of 25 feet (10 M). The next important road comes the Tista valley road, which connects Sikkim and further (20Km ) from Siliguri to Sivak and 34 miles (55 Kms.) from Sivok to Rangpo on the borders of Sikkim . From Takdah , two roads bifurcate to Sikkim and Pedong and further to Thode . Another important road runs from Islampur (North Dinajpur District of W.Bengal ) connecting Khoribari , Naxalbari , Bagdogra , Mirik , Sukia Pokhari , Darjeeling to Sikkim . The next important road is from Ghum to Simanabasti , covering 7 miles (12 Kms ) from Ghum to Sukia Pokhari and 3 miles (5 Km .) from Sukia Pokhari to Simanabasti on the Sukia Pokhari to Simanabasti on Nepal border . All these roads present a tough task in construction, because construction and maintenance of road in mountainous areas face problems of topography heavy rainfall as well as landslides. The construction of numerous bridge and tunnels also pose difficulties during construction and also afterward maintenance.

As the tea gardens grew in numbers and the production increased, the traffic increased to meet the related population growth over time. Apprehending the need of growing carriage the Govt. assigned an enterprise to construct a steam tramway along the Cart road , running from Siliguri to Darjeeling in 1879. This line was opened for traffic in 1880 upto Kurseong and by 1881 upto Darjeeling. Later on this rail line was designated as Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, which dignified the Darjeeling district. The opening of the railway widened the options of businessmen and travelers substantially.