

## **History of Urbanization and Present Status of Siliguri Town As A Nodal Centre of North Bengal In India**

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### **Abstract:-**

**Siliguri is an metropolitan area without any industrial growth. Continuous growth of urban population from the past creates so many problems. There are some negative impacts of urbanization which include creation of slum areas, poverty and unemployment. These slum areas are the sources of crime, drug abuse, beggary, gambling etc. Another problem of urbanization is pollution. The level of water and air pollution in siliguri metropolitan area is so alarming that it needs a continuous awareness programme. At present problems of isolation and loneliness of a section of population is an added headache of this metropolitan town.**

**Keywords:- urbanization through decades, population growth , poverty, slum areas, unemployment.**

### **Introduction:-**

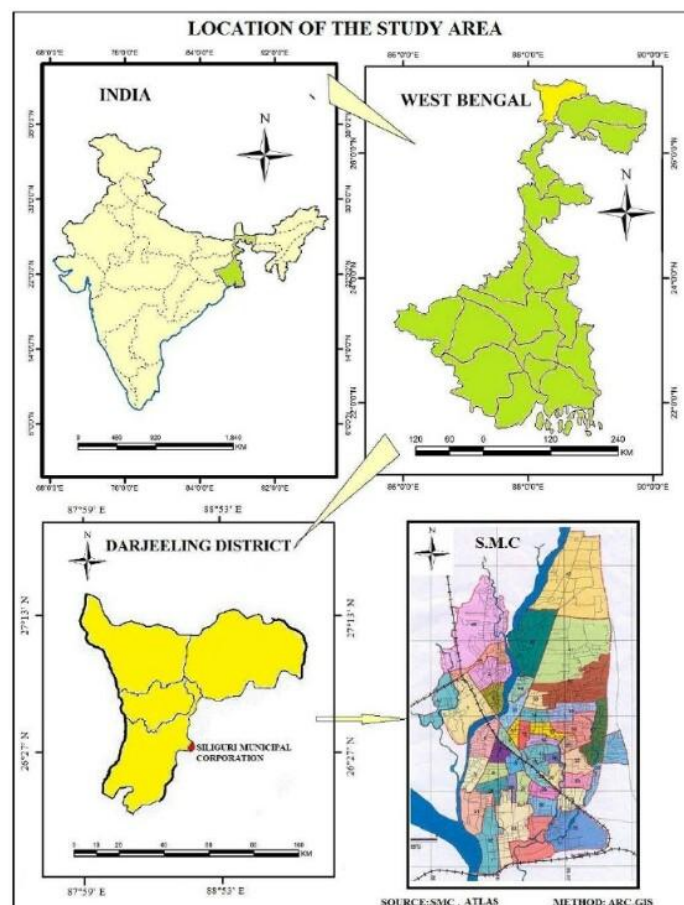
The process of urbanization indicates the growth of towns and cities. It also denotes the spread of urban way of life to the countryside. In present times with the spread of industrialization the process of urbanization has received unprecedented movement all over the world. In the third world countries the high growth rate of population is a major factor of urbanization. People from the surrounding parts are coming to the urban centres for job and create more problems related to urbanization. The rapid growth of population in Silliguri town also has led to the scarcity of public utilities services. It has led to the formulation of the controversial nation of “over urbanization.” Siliguri started as a small area on the bank of Mahananda.1815 onwards, Siliguri started growing rapidly as a small city. In 1865, the British captured Darjeeling and the entire Duars region to build tea plantations and export to England. Later in 1950 Siliguri achieved municipal status.

## Objective:-

The main objective of this study is to find out the changing scenario of Siliguri Municipal area from its rural character through decades and the problem of urbanization at present. In spite of its Metropolitan nature, the city does not get better infrastructural facilities. The main problem of this area is the high growth rate of population and insufficient facilities and amenities could not support this vast population of an unplanned city.

## Study area:-

Siliguri town is situated in the district of Darjeeling of West Bengal. Siliguri city lies on the geographical co-ordinates of 26 degree 42 minute 57second N and 88 degree 25 minute 24 second E



## **Data base:-**

Data have been mainly collected from secondary source including Census Report, Internet sources etc.

## **Methodology:-**

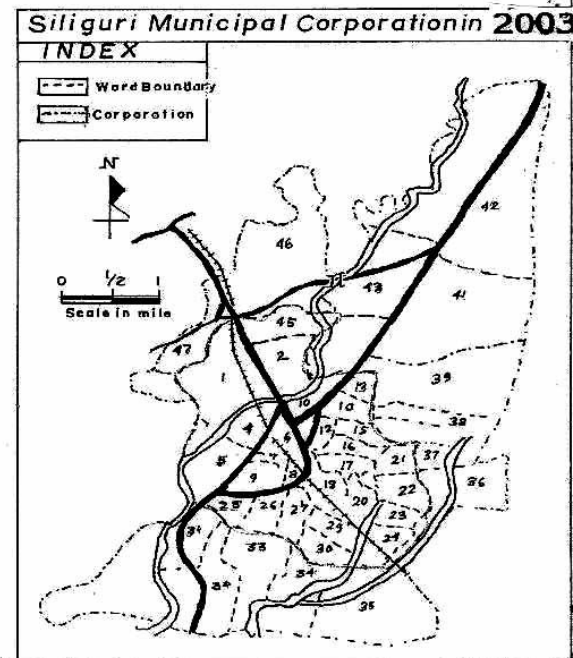
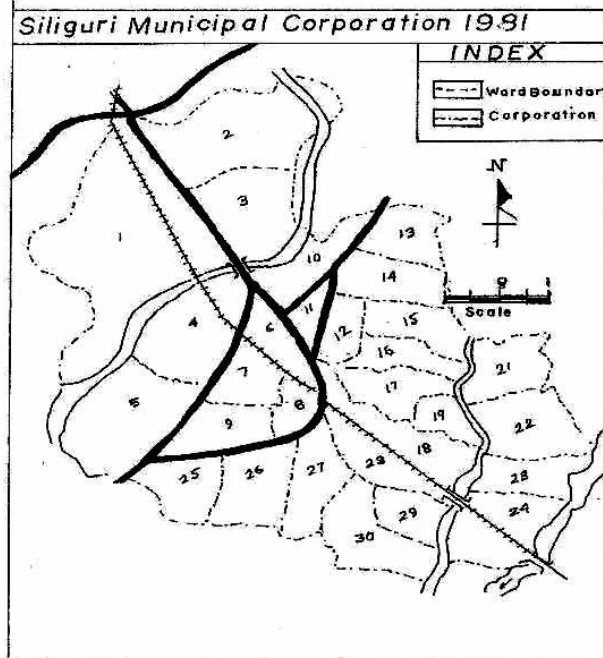
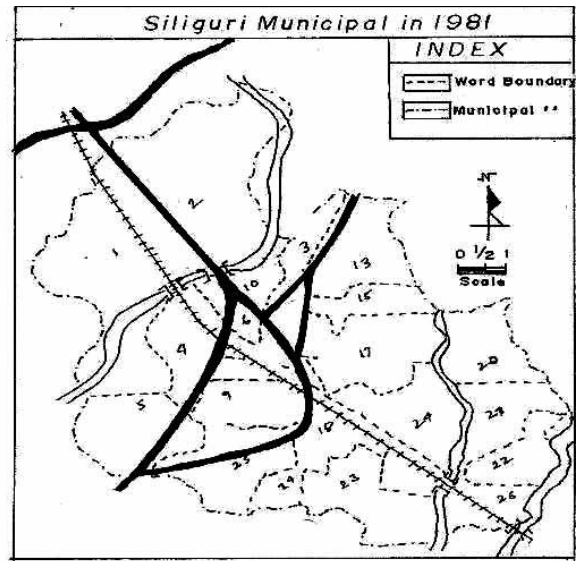
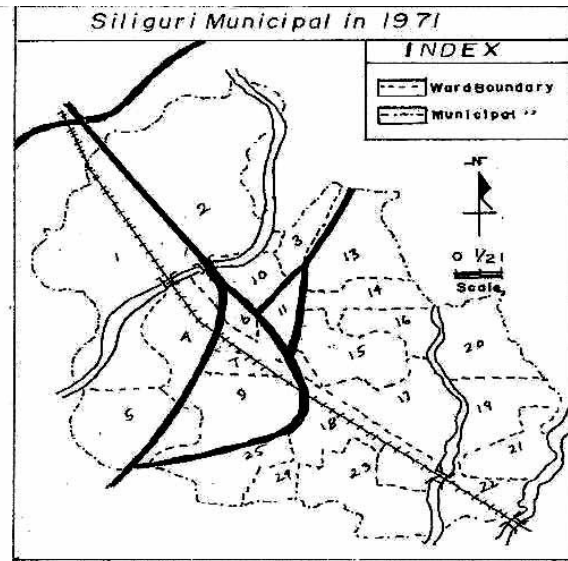
Information collected from secondary sources are analysed and after identifying the problems planning has been done on short term basis.

## **Analysis:-**

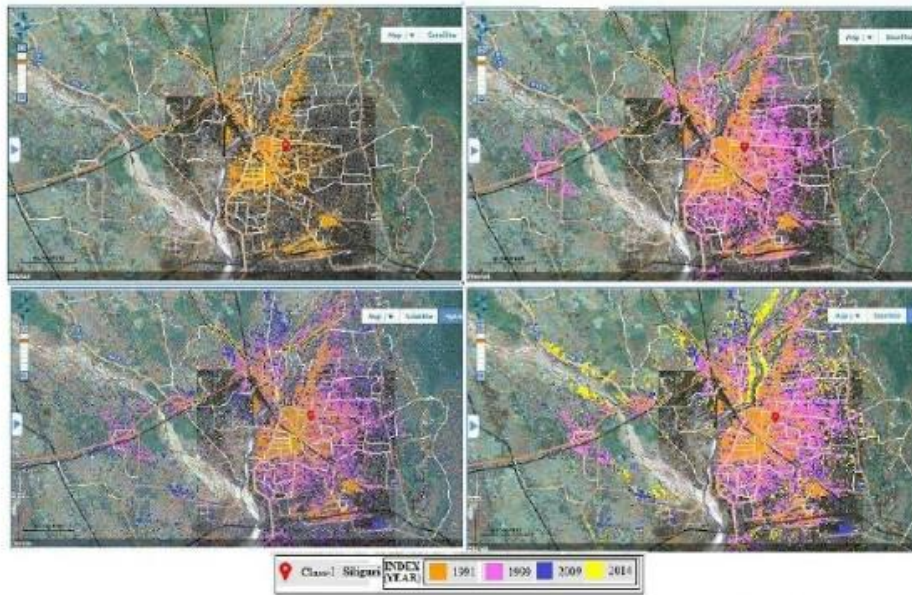
In India the process of urbanization takes away a lion's share of resources and this impress upon the rate of economic growth of society. In some places the availability of civic amenities and facilities is so poor that these have now reached a point of breakdown. The concept of urbanization is not very unknown to us. But several Scholars have stressed that India does not suffer from the problem of once urbanization. The major problems of urbanization in India include inadequate housing unsafe and sufficient water supply, insufficient and inadequate transport, pollution etc.

The rapid growth in the population in cities has given rise to numerous social and economic problems also among which the problem of housing is the most distressing. Availability of water for domestic use constitutes one of the basic civic amenities. Several studies have brought out the plight of the slum dwellers in this regard. With the urbanization process the population of urban area is gradually increasing which create lack of efficient transport facilities in many urban areas.

Siliguri was a small rural area at its initial stage which gradually changes its shape from 1970's. From 1970 to 2003 shape and size of Siliguri town was changed and converted to municipal area. With the increase of population, wards were also increasing through decades. At present total number of wards are 47. Settlements are mainly found on both sides of Mahananda river. With the increase of population, pollution level of Mahananda river shows a drastic change. Polluted water of Mahananda river now needs some rectification and purification as it degrades the environment.



## URBAN GROWTH MONITORING



SOURCE: BHUVAN:ISRO



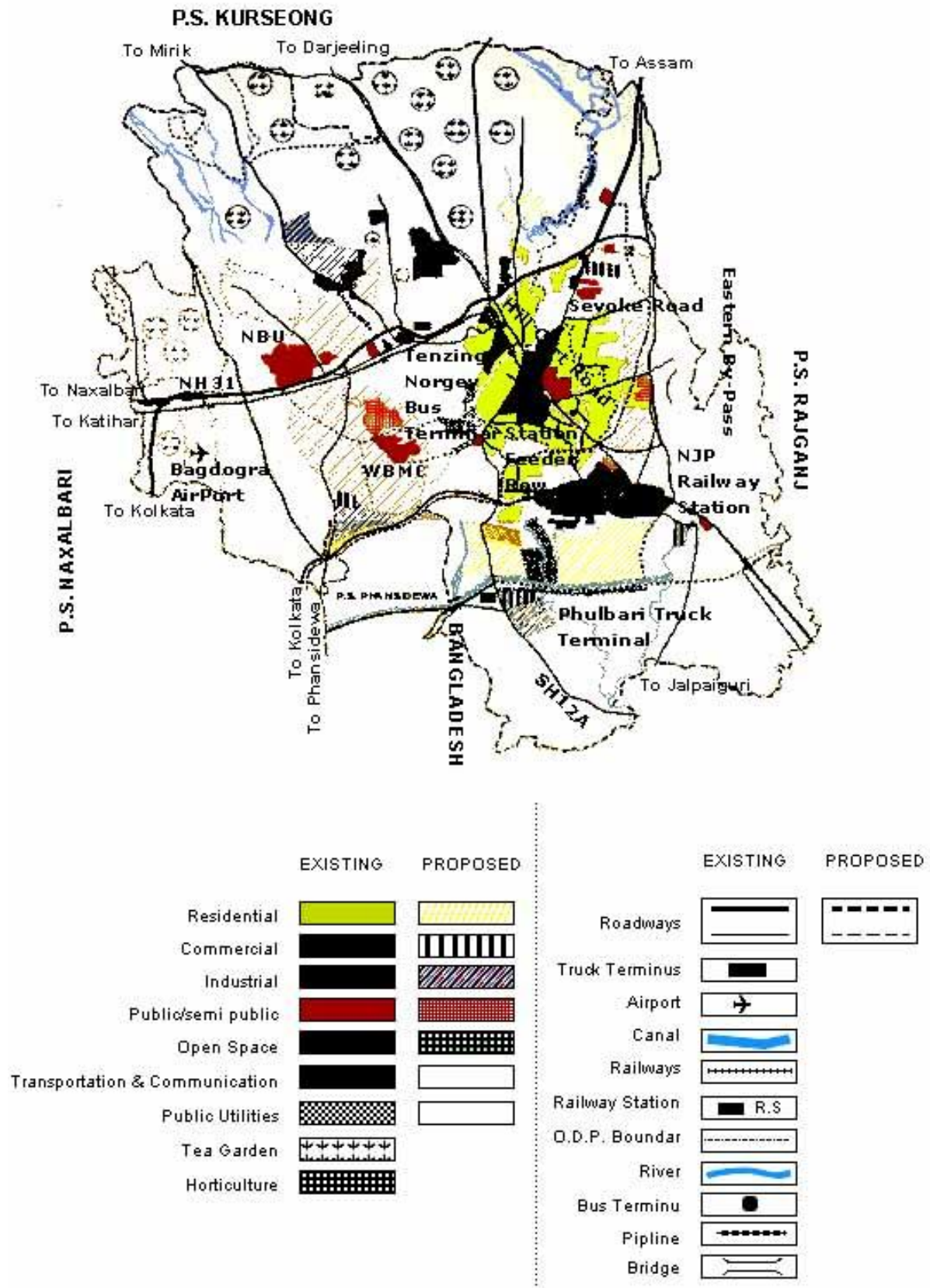
There is a continuous growth of population in Siliguri from the very beginning. People from different parts of North Bengal, from other states are gathered here for job as it is a nodal centre of North Bengal.

**Table no.1:- Growth of population (in percentage)**

Year	Growth of population
1999-2001	+8.09%
2001-2011	+4.09%

Source: Based on Census data

From the above table it is clear that population of siliguri town was rising gradually. Growth rate of population was +8.09% from 1999 to 2001 whereas between 2001 and 2011 population growth was +4.09%. The continuous influx of population after independence has been reduced due to increase of literacy rate. At present, a vast section of educated people migrate to other states as well as to other countries for better job opportunities. The map below indicates the land use pattern of Siliguri town including its administrative area, residential area, commercial, industrial, public place, present and proposed status of roads etc. But due to lack of proper planning at its primary stage Siliguri Municipality area is suffering from a problem of congestion. CBD area also has been shifted from Hill Cart road to Sevoke road.



**Table no.02:-Growth rate of total population**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total population</u>
1931	6067 ( source: Internet)
1941	10487
1951	32480
1961	65471
1971	97484
1981	153825
1991	338361
2001	472374
2011	7,05,575
2019	9,72,643 ( projected)

Source: Siliguri Municipal Corporation Report (2001).

Siliguri city, located in the state of West Bengal in India is a municipality area. In 1931 Siliguri had a population of 6067. Siliguri city comes under silliguri metropolitan area where the total population according to 2011 census is 7, 05,575. Siliguri metropolitan includes Binnaguri, Chakiabhita, Dabgram(P), Kalkur(P) and silliguri. According to 2011 census total population of Siliguri town is 5, 13,264. From the above table it is clear that between 2001 and 2011 and after that the growth rate of population is +4.08%. Before this period, from 1991 to 2001 the growth rate was +8.09% which was higher than the present growth rate. The city has 154 residential areas declared as Slum by the municipal area. There is a big gap between slum area and non slum area. The population of Siliguri town is increasing which creates a lack of efficient transport facility. In fact an efficient and well knit network of transport facilities is essentially required for the movements of the city dwellers between their residence and place of work and the central business area. But the narrow roads and streets, their poor condition, on the other hand numerous vehicles like autos, rickshaws, e-rickshaws, bi-cycles, van, four wheelers, and public buses all plying together and create a unique scene of traffic congestion and traffic jams in every part of silliguri town. Within 50 meters of radius twenty numbers of different vehicles mainly automobiles are seen together, which is very common picture of silliguri town. This is mainly due to the lack of planning and lack of space for expansion of road. The old unplanned city, with narrow roads,



has hardly often any scope for efficient transport facilities. High density of traffic flow is the major source of environmental pollution of silliguri town, especially in the hub of the town.

Silliguri is an urban area where there is no industrial growth. The high density of population in the urban area is due to migration of people from surrounding areas for business. Silliguri is a commercially developed town faced rapid population growth. People come from

Bangladesh as well as from Nepal and Bhutan. The continuous growth of population would not support its carrying capacity. This excessive burden of population creates slum areas which is the major problem of this urban metropolis. Nearly 80% of the slum dwellers are emigrant of other states and countries. The slums are situated along the river banks, along the railway track side and on the vacant land. As it has been stated before that according to the “Urban Poverty Eradication Cell (UPE)” of silliguri Municipal Corporation there are 54 slum areas. So many problems are associated with the slum areas like lack of safe drinking water, the absence of basic sanitation, and hygienic practices. It is again associated with high morbidity and mortality. Different sanitation programmes have not been succeeded because people were poorly informed and of course because of illiteracy which is another negative factor of this slum area.. Silliguri as a micro cosmopolitan area of North Bengal lacking industrial fundamentals but it is surrounded by three important foreign countries from where people come here to get job. Thus overpopulation has become almost inevitable evil which cannot be supported by the town. The national institute of urban affairs, New Delhi has identified two factors which are responsible for the development of slum areas these are towns attract more people from the rural areas offering greater potential for employment and the limited amount of land prohibit the access of poor to the urban land market.

Thus slum areas of Silliguri town can be represented by overcrowding, faulty arrangement of building, narrowness of street, inadequacy of open space, lack of public utilities including drainage, electricity, health centres. Crime, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, drug abuse, beggary, gambling all are associated with these slum areas.

Another problem of urbanization of silliguri town is pollution. The main sources of pollution in the urban areas are old vehicles those emit too much CO<sub>2</sub>. With the high growth rate of population, per capita automobile use are also increasing. At present level of pollution in silliguri town is alarming. The problems of pollution is so different from many other problems that common people hardly comprehend its seriousness, although everyone slowly

and gradually victim of its ill effects. Silliguri town with high growth rate of population and excessive load of vehicles facing the problems of environmental pollution. It needs a serious awareness program which should be more effective.

An UN report on water conservation published in March 2017 reveals that due to its unique geographical location in South Asia, the Indian subcontinent will face the problem of water crisis and India would be at the epicentre of this conflict. Siliiguri is not an exceptional one. Local residents of 47 wards of silliguri Municipal Corporation are suffering from drinking water scarcity since 1916.

Another problem of urbanization is isolation. Social interaction is the basis of all forms of social relationship. In cities due to large and heterogeneous population the possibilities of such relationship are considerably minimized. Residential aggregation is one of the manifestations of partial isolation in cities. As the process of urbanization accelerates, the city life tends to be rapidly characterized by cultural diversities, socio economic in-equalities, competition, conflict and several other manifestations of complexities of social reality. The problem of maladjustment becomes more acute for the city dwellers who are relatively recent migrants. They suffer from the problems of maladjustment because they feel lost amidst the pressure of two cultures as they cannot completely change them self from one cultural system to another.

The increasing proportion of this evil consequences of urbanization has let to some systematic efforts for effectively curbing there incidence. These efforts include legislative measure for the removal of urban poverty and unemployment as well as measures of slum clearance and urban community development programme.

## **Conclusion:-**

From the sixth five year plan onwards special attention is being paid to the socio economic development of small towns and cities to divert the flow of rural migrants. It is hoped that with the rise of new opportunities of employment in towns and small cities the metropolitan centres will be relieved of further increase in the pressure of excessive population, which has by now made it almost impossible for the civic authorities to ensure efficient and adequate supply of public utilities to the citizens. On the basis of analysis planning should be done for future development on short term and long term basis.

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## APPENDIX 1

Ward no.	Area in acres	Area in Km <sup>2</sup>	Total population	Ward wise 2001 density of population
1	570.5	2.3	17843	31.27
2	371.5	1.5	11436	30.78
3	251.25	1.02	11753	46.78
4	280.75	1.13	20028	71.34
5	301.05	1.22	15326	30.9
6	50.95	0.2	9023	177.09
7	81	0.32	9889	122.08
8	49.5	0.2	7843	158.45
9	70.5	0.28	7306	103.63
10	191	0.77	4720	24.71
11	41.05	0.16	2933	71.45
12	58.95	0.24	3772	63.99
13	69.25	0.28	5070	73.21
14	80.75	0.32	6407	79.34
15	84.05	0.34	8103	96.4
16	60.05	0.24	5984	99.65
17	49.95	0.2	5485	109.8

18	40.65	0.16	8440	207.63
19	49.35	0.2	3233	65.51
20	60	0.24	9869	164.48
21	80.55	0.32	5875	72.94
22	119.45	0.48	10293	86.17
23	70	0.28	6205	88.64
24	120.05	0.48	11165	93
25	129.95	0.25	8525	65.6
26	60.85	0.24	4873	60.06
27	89.15	0.36	5630	63.15
28	170	0.69	9578	56.34
29	170	0.69	4783	28.14
30	108	0.43	6510	60.27
31	200.05	0.8	13414	67.05
32	319.95	1.29	11845	37.02
33	280.15	1.13	13543	48.34
34	319.85	1.28	16560	31.78
35	481	1.94	14945	31.07
36	239	0.96	13553	36.7
37	160	0.64	14431	90.19
38	161.45	0.65	11235	69.59
39	194.07	0.78	11237	37.9
40	579.03	2.43	18164	31.37