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Socio-Economic Condition of Slum Dwellers in Bankura Town: An Exploratory Analysis

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Abstract

The word "slum" refers to informal settlements in which the condition of houses is bad and living conditions are very poor. In Bankura town, there are 295 total slums, which are home to 46,341 people. This represents around 33.73% of Bankura town's overall population. The slum population in Bankura town is continuously increasing. The slum dwellers in Bankura town mainly deprived from education, metal road, water supply, drainage and sanitation system. Some basic amenities need urgent attention in slum area by ULB of Bankura town. i.e. water supply, drainage and sanitation, education, shelter and road etc. The highest number of slum population located in Ward nos. 4, 10, 12, 17, 19, and 20 and maximum number of BPL population is located in Ward no. 19 and 20. The highest number of illiterate slum population is found in Ward no. 4, 10, 12, 17, 19, 20 and 22. The highest number of households in Ward no. 19 is having remote access to drinking water; whereas in Ward no. 1 & 2 are having a lowest number of houses with remote access to drinking water sources. The highest number of houses with access road to house as kutchra road is found in Ward no. 19. The highest number of slum population identifying use of toilet as others, non-earning population, woman-earning member and drop out children in slum is observed in Ward no. 19. It is observed that slum population in Ward no. 19 and 20 are in worst condition in comparison to Ward no. 1 and 2. Development policies must be framed to prevent the formation of new slums and take necessary strategies for the development of socio-economic condition of slum dwellers in Bankura town.

Keywords: Basic Amenities, Bankura Town, Socio-Economic Condition, Slum Dwellers, ULB.

Introduction

The word "slum" refers to informal settlements in which the condition of houses is bad and living conditions are very poor. The slum areas are often crowded and many people settle into congested areas within the city. Slums are not a recent phenomenon; they have long existed in almost every city, especially during the urbanisation periods and industrialization.

In India, slums are known, for example, as "jhuggis" in the northern parts of the country. "ahatas" in Kanpur; "Cheries" in Chennai; "bustees" in Kolkata; "zodpatpatties" and "patra chawls" in Mumbai and Ahmadabad. The slum dwellers are the people which are living in the slum areas.

Definition of the Slums

There are many institutions defines the slums according to various indicators. Such of the definitions of the slums are as follows:

The Encyclopedia Britannica

Defines slums as "... residential areas that are physically and socially deteriorated and in which satisfactory family life is impossible. Bad housing is a major index of slum conditions. By bad housing is meant dwellings

that have inadequate light, air, toilet and bathing facilities; that are in bad repair, dump and improperly heated; that do not afford opportunity for family privacy; that are subject to fire hazard and that overcrowd the land, leaving no space for recreational use.

In Census of India 2011

“Three types of slums have been defined namely, Notified slum, Recognized slum and Identified slum.

1. All notified areas in a town or city notified as ‘slum’ by state, Union Territories Administration or local Government under any Act including a ‘slum Act’ may be considered as **Notified slums**.
2. All areas recognized as ‘slum’ by state, Union territories Administration or local Government, Housing and slum Boards, which may have not been formally notified as slum under any act may be considered as **Recognized slums**.
3. A compact area of at least 300 populations or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities. Such areas should be identified personally by the charge officer and also inspected by an officer nominated by Directorate of Census Operations. This fact must be duly recorded in the charge register. Such areas may be considered as **Identified slums**.

UN-Habitat Defines

“A slum is a contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterized as having inadequate housing and basic services. A slum is often not recognized and addressed by the public authorities as an integral or equal part of the city.” Slum households as a group of individuals living under the same roof that lack one or more of the conditions are:
i. insecure residential status; ii. Inadequate access to safe water; iii. Inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure; iv. Poor structural quality of housing; v. Overcrowding.

Review of Literature

Here we have made an attempt to review some important socio economic aspects of slums in the world.

Hatekar and Rode (2003) observed that seasonal wasting incidence is likely to be higher in girls. Malnourishment is very likely to occur when insufficient incomes co-exist with poor coverage of basic amenities and health services. Girls in urban areas tend to be better than those in rural areas. But at the same time urban slum dwellers are undernourished. Proportion of undernourishment was very high in slum areas. The study empirically proved that the incidence of malnourishment among urban slum children was very close to the incidence of jawahar tribal.

Karn et al., (2003) examined the relationship between living environment and Health Status of Urban communities in Mumbai. The survey covered 1070 households in slums, squatters and Pavement dwellers. The study revealed that income, literacy, sanitation and personal hygiene have had impact on the morbidity of the people. The study empirically proved the effect of socio-economic and the environmental factors affecting health status of urban poor.

Gangadharan (2005) studied the health behavior of five social classes, upper class, upper middle, lower middle, upper lower and lower in the utilization of health services in Kannur district. The study of age and system of medicine utilized revealed that at the age up to 15 and at the age above 60 allopathy was utilized maximum both in the urban and slum areas. The study proved that with an increase in the level of education, utilization of private health facilities goes up and the utilization of public health facilities comes down. The study observed that both the urban and slum area very low social class households were educationally backward, their knowledge, level of diseases, available health services were found to be lower than that of middle and high class households. The low and very low social classes used mostly the government health services because of their poor financial status.

Madhusoodhanan (2006) had conducted a study in Trivandrum city to examine the problems of slum dwellers and various governmental measures implemented for their rehabilitation. The study showed that both the pull and push factors were influenced for the growth of slums. The push factors are family specific and the pull factors consist of

employment linked migration, political support and hope of access to better social infrastructure. The study revealed that several deserving slum dwellers were denied the benefits of developmental schemes because they do not have pattayam to the land that they occupy, people who do not have pattayams are more vulnerable and marginalized than those who have benefited from governmental schemes, that is the relatively better-off sections manage to extra more benefits than those who are worse off.

Location of the Study Area

Regional/physical Setting: Bankura town is situated in the western part of the state of West Bengal. It is a part of Burdwan Division of the state and is included in the area known as “Rarh” in Bengal. The town is flanked by Dwarakeswar and Gandheswari Rivers on the northern and southern sides respectively and is located in a transitional natural region between the alluvial plain in the east and denuded spurs of Chotanagpur plateau in the west. The general elevation of the area ranges from 150 to 160 m above MSL with a general gradient from west to east.

Administrative Setting: Bankura, a Class – I municipal town / city is the headquarter of Bankura district, West Bengal. It has been a centre of Western Bengal’s Malla kingdom and its nearby areas have enormous cultural and historical importance.

Geographical Setting: Bankura town is located centrally within the district in between 87°2’0” E to 87°6’0” E longitude and 23°13’0” N to 23°15’30” N latitude. The town is 35 km away from the industrial city of Durgapur, about 250 km from Kolkata.

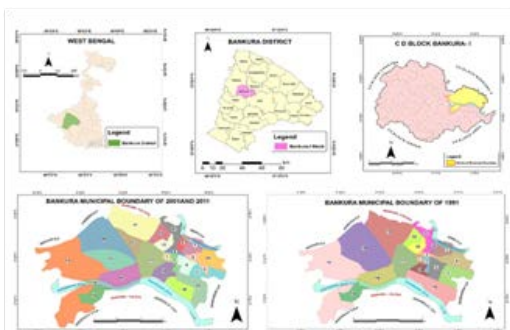


Figure 1 Location map of Bankura Municipality of Bankura District in West Bengal



Figure 2 Location of slum in Bankura town

Objectives: The present study attempts to investigate the socio-economic condition of the slums dwellers in Bankura town in the light of the following objectives

- To investigate the socio-economic conditions of slums dwellers in the study area.
- To explore the problems of slums in the study area.
- To suggest measures for improvement of socio-economic conditions of slum dwellers.

Database and Methodology

Any research work in geography needs a lot of different types of information. Data for the present study have been collected mainly from two different sources – Primary Data and Secondary Data. Primary data have been collected from Bankura municipality ward to ward survey. The secondary sources of data on the above mention aspects have been collected from –

1. District Statistical Handbooks, Bankura.
2. Census of Bankura district (year 1991, 2001 and 2011)
3. Websites
4. Books and journal
5. Records from Bankura municipal office.

After collection of data these are processed statistically. The methods are both qualitative and quantitative. The data have been obtained, relevant maps have been prepared using cartographic and GIS technology and analysis has been made to deduce certain facts.

Discussion and Result

Socio Economic Conditions of Slum Dwellers:

The social status of the slum dwellers is not well. They belong to poor build-up households, lack of basic amenities like drinking water, lighting, electricity, latrine facility, sewerage facility. Slum dwellers are poor and marginalized section of the society. The economic conditions of the slum dwellers are very low. Generally, slum dwellers are engaged in low level of economic activities like rag keeping, cleaning of houses, housemaid, labourer, autodriver, rickshaw pullers etc. Thus the economic conditions of the slum dwellers are not good and they earn less amount of money. Due to less income slum dwellers are unable to purchase the basic needs of daily lives. This study focuses the general socio economic conditions of slum dwellers in Bankura town.

In Bankura town, there are 295 total slums, which are home to 46,341 people. This represents around 33.73% of Bankura town’s overall population. The slum population in Bankura town is continuously increasing. As per the recorded data, total number of slum population is 63,324 in Bankura town, out of which the estimated BPL population is 16,471.

Figure 3: shows the highest number of slum population located in Ward nos. 4, 10, 12, 17, 19, and 20. The medium category of slum population is located in the western and north-western part of Bankura town. The slum population observed in Ward no. 1, 2, 3 and 8 is less than 1500.

Figure 4: shows the position of slum BPL population in Bankura town. As per the distribution, Bankura town is categorized into 4 classes, i.e. (i) <550, (ii) 551 – 750, (iii) 751 – 1050 and (iv) > 1051. The maximum number of BPL population is located in Ward no. 19 and 20, followed by Ward no. 23. Medium number of BPL population is found in central, western and northern part of the study area. The lowest number of BPL population is found in Ward no. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 & 9.

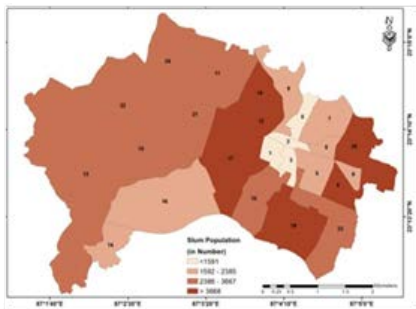


Figure 3 Ward-wise Spatial Distribution of Slum Population

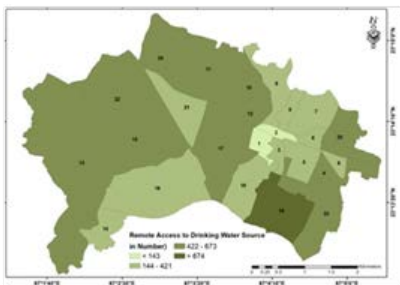


Figure 4 Ward wise Spatial Distribution of BPL Population

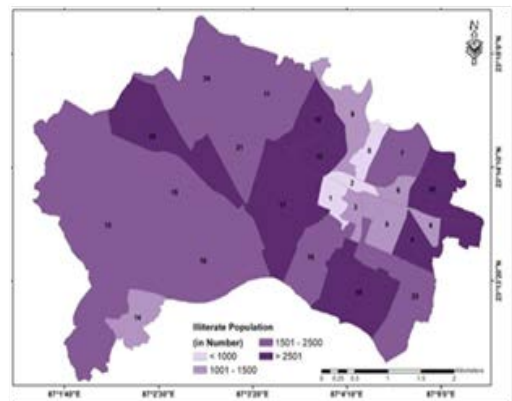


Figure 5 Ward wise spatial distribution of illiterate slum population

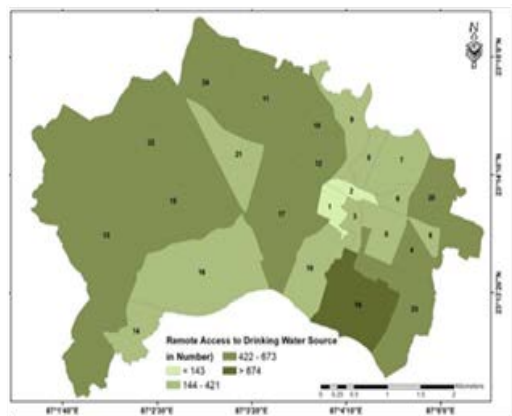


Figure 6 Ward wise spatial distribution houses with remote access to drinking water source

Figure 5: shows the ward wise illiterate slum population in Bankura town. As per the study of Bankura town, the illiterate population number is divided into 4 categories, namely (i) <1000, (ii) 1001 – 1500, (iii) 1501 - 2500, and (iv) >2501. The highest number of illiterate slum population is found in Ward no. 4, 10, 12, 17, 19, 20 and 22. Moderate number of illiterate slum population is found in Ward no. 3,5,6,7,9,11,13,14,15,16,18,21 and 23. The lowest number of illiterate slum population is found in Ward no. 1, 2 and 8.

Figure 6: shows ward wise distribution of slum household having remote access to drinking water. The highest number of households in Ward no. 19 is having remote access to drinking water; whereas in Ward no. 1 & 2 are having a lowest number of houses with remote access to drinking water sources. The remaining Ward nos. is having remote access to drinking water.

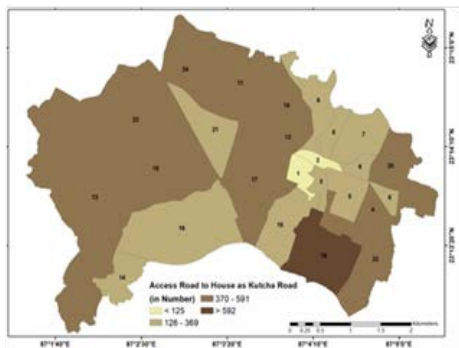


Figure 7 Ward wise spatial distribution houses with access road to house as kutchra road

Figure 7: shows ward wise number of slum households having the access of Kutchra road in the study area. As per the observation, the study area is divided into 4 classes, namely (i) <125, (ii) 126 – 369, (iii) 370 – 591, and (iv) >592. The highest number of houses with access road to house as kutchra road is found in Ward no. 19, followed by Ward no. 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 23, and 24. The lowest number of houses with access road to house as kutchra road is found in Ward nos. 1 and 2. The remaining Ward nos. of slum household having the access of Kutchra road in Bankura town.

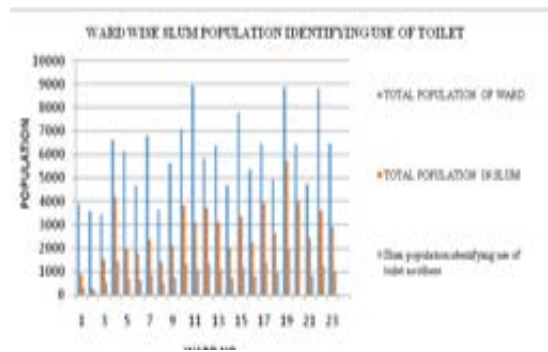


Figure 8 Ward Wise Slum Population Identifying use of Toilet

Figure 8: shows the ward wise slum population identifying use of toilet as others in the study area. The highest number of slum population identifying use of toilet as others is observed in Ward no. 19 (2009 out of 5738 total slum population) in the south-eastern part of the town, followed by Ward no. 4, 17, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 22. The lowest number of slum population identifying use of toilet as others is observed in Ward no. 2 (108 out of 309 total slum population) of Bankura town, followed by Ward no. 1 and 8.

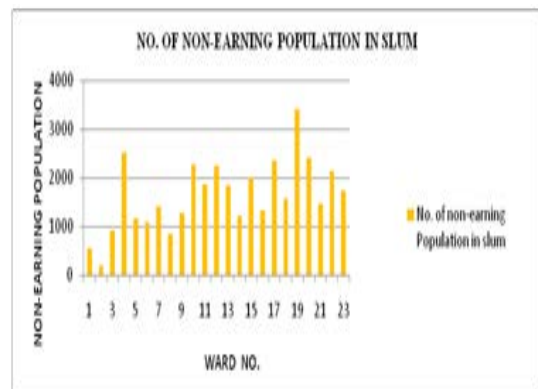


Figure 9 Ward wise number of non-earning population in slum

Figure 9: shows the ward wise number of non-earning population in slum of Bankura town. The highest number of non-earning population in slum is observed in Ward no. 19 (3441 out of 5738 total slum population) in the south-eastern part of the town, followed by Ward no. 4, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 20 and 22. The lowest number of non-earning population

in slum population is observed in Ward no. 2 (186 out of 309 total slum population) of Bankura town, followed by Ward no. 1, 3 and 8. Moderate number of non-earning population (1000 to 2000) in slum is observed in Ward nos. 5,6,7,9,11,13,14,16,18,21 and 23.

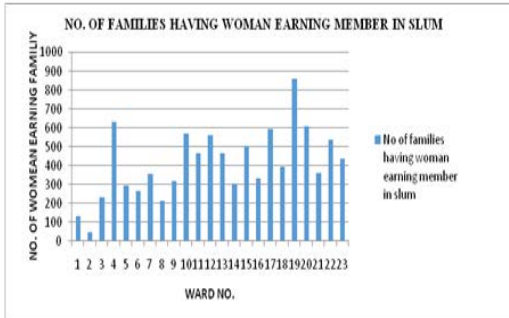


Figure 10 Ward wise number of families having woman earning member in slum

Figure 10: shows the ward wise number of families having woman-earning member in slum of Bankura town. The highest number of families having woman-earning member in slum is observed in Ward no. 19 (860 out of 5738 total slum population) in the south-eastern part of the town, followed by Ward no. 4 and 20. The lowest number of families having woman-earning member in slum population is observed in Ward no. 2 (46 out of 309 total slum population) of Bankura town, followed by Ward no. 1,3,5,6 and 8. Ward wise moderate number of families having woman-earning member (300 to 600) in slum is observed in Ward nos. 7,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,21,22 and 23.

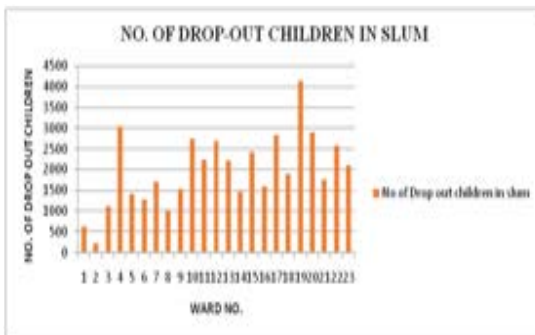


Figure 11 Ward wise number of drop-out children in slum

Figure 11: shows the ward wise number of drop out children in slum of Bankura town. The highest number of drop out children in slum is observed in Ward no. 19 (4130 out of 5738 total slum population) in the south-eastern part of the town. The lowest number of drop out children in slum population is observed in Ward no. 2 (223 out of 309 total slum population) of Bankura town. Ward wise moderate number of drop out children in slum is observed in Ward nos. 7,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,21,22 and 23.

Major Findings

- The slum dwellers in Bankura town mainly deprived from education, metal road, water supply, drainage and sanitation system.
- Some basic amenities need urgent attention in slum area by ULB of Bankura town. i.e. water supply , drainage and sanitation, education, shelter and road etc.
- Most of the woman residents of slums do not constitute a skilled working class. They engage themselves with low income generating activities, like construction worker, housemaid and vegetable seller in market.
- Due to drop-out from school and lack of education in slum area, there is high child marriage and high fertility rate.
- Community or Public toilets are less in the slum area of Bankura town. So, there are long queues in front of public toilet and slum dwellers practice of open defecation in ground, high drain and river side.
- As per the study majority of the households in slum area depends on public water sources. Duration of water supply is twice in a day. Due to any maintenance work in pipeline and in dry season water supply becomes uncertain.
- There is high concentration of BPL population in the slum areas of Bankura town. These Economically Backward Class communities are unaware about health and sanitation.

Recommendations

- ULB should provide more community or public toilets in slum area for prevention of water and land pollution.

- Bankura Municipality or ULB should undertake measures to enhance proper drainage, sewerage system, education, road and adequate water supply for the sake of slum dwellers.
- Urban local government should hold up the slum dwellers economically and informed about various welfare schemes and programs by engaging NGOs and local administration. These efforts will develop the standard of living or socio-economic condition of the slum dwellers of Bankura town which will help them to enjoy a decent way of living.
- More skill development program and livelihood measures should be taken for the sake of slum dwellers. It will help them to increase their income or economic status.
- Awareness programme are also necessary about education, health, sanitation, job prospect, child labour, woman education and employment opportunities for the betterment of slum dwellers socio-economic condition.
- Woman worker are working very hard for their livelihood, but they are not getting paid as per their occupation. So, respective authorities have to take necessary steps to stop this kind of social discrimination in the society.

Conclusion

The rate of population growth in urban areas is higher than rural areas. The population growth is related with the economic growth of an area. Most of the slums in Bankura town are unauthorized in character. Unauthorized slums are ones which have been created by impoverished people who have been forced to leave a specific area of the city itself and infringe on public or private land along the sides of the roads, canals, and drains. People live in terrible circumstances without access to fundamental urban local government services like education, road network, water supply, sanitation, drainage, etc. It is observed that slums were unequally distributed with their diverse socio-economic characteristics in the study area. The socio-economic condition of the slum people is very poor. Only 55 percent are economically active. Moreover, it is observed that slum population in Ward no. 19 and 20 are in worst condition in comparison to Ward no. 1 and 2. Development

policies must be framed to stop the slum population in Bankura town. All the stakeholders i.e. BMC authorities, police department, politicians, NGOs, social workers and the public should jointly take firm decision to prevent the formation of new slums and take necessary strategies for the development of socio-economic condition of slum dwellers in Bankura town.

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