

ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE SLUM AREAS OF BERHAMPORE MUNICIPALITY, MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT: *The appearance of slum can be seen with the process of urbanization in a developing country like India. Cities are facing a massive change in their size, population and services. The cities, irrespective of their size, provide possibilities of varied occupations and collective services, such as health, education, cultural, technological, commercial or industrial services and thus act as focal points of development opportunities. With this development many problems arrives for a city and nowadays slum is one of them. Most of the slums faces economic problems like unemployment, low per capita income, poverty etc. they termed as urban poor. With increasing urban migration in the years ahead, the economic problems in urban slums will also acquire increasing dimension unless special efforts are initiated to mitigate these problems of the urban poor. Improving economic condition of urban poor requires a more direct, more focused, and more integrated strategy. This paper presents a content analysis on the economic status of slum people of Berhampore Municipality. Here the economic condition of those people have been reflected.*

Keywords: *Urbanization, Slum, Development, Unemployment, poverty*

INTRODUCTION:

A slum is a compact area of overcrowded populations, poorly built congested dwelling condition, unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities. Living conditions in slums have a direct impact on people's health. One of the major challenges that face urban planners globally is the proliferation of slums in urban areas and the host of health hazards that they bring along with their wake.

India is now a fast developing country, and migration is a normal event here. As a result of this the population of the cities is growing up day by day. But nowadays most of the Indian cities faces the problem of slum as a major impact of migration. People from surrounding area comes to the main city or towns for employment and takes shelter in the low cost regions. This is how slums grows up in a city or town. Berhampore also stuck with this problem. People from surrounding areas, villages, states and countries comes to this place for better lifestyle and as an impact of this, slowly slums grown up in Berhampore. These slums grown up in Berhampore beside the rail lines, highways and the river Bhagirathi. But these slums faces many economic problems. Here the economic problems have been highlighted and some polices have been discussed which have taken by the municipal authority to eradicate these problems.

OBJECTIVES BEHIND THE STUDY:

Major objectives of the present study are

- To study the characteristics of slum population in Berhampore Town.
- To analyse nature of economic activities and income scenario of the households.

STUDY AREA:

Berhampore Municipality is one of the oldest municipalities in West Bengal. The areal boundary of Berhampore Municipality was specified in the year 1869 and in 1876 Berhampore Municipality was established finally. Berhampore Municipality geographically extends latitudinally from 24°6'N to 24°6'N and longitudinally between 88°15'E to 88°19'E. Total area of this municipality is 31.42 sq.km and it has a population of 160,168. Now the Municipality is comprised of total 25 wards. It is the District Head Quarter of Murshidabad. Berhampore Municipal area remains an ideal example of "Unity in Diversity". It is a unique field of combination of different caste and religion with peaceful integrity which is being nourished by Berhampore Municipality.

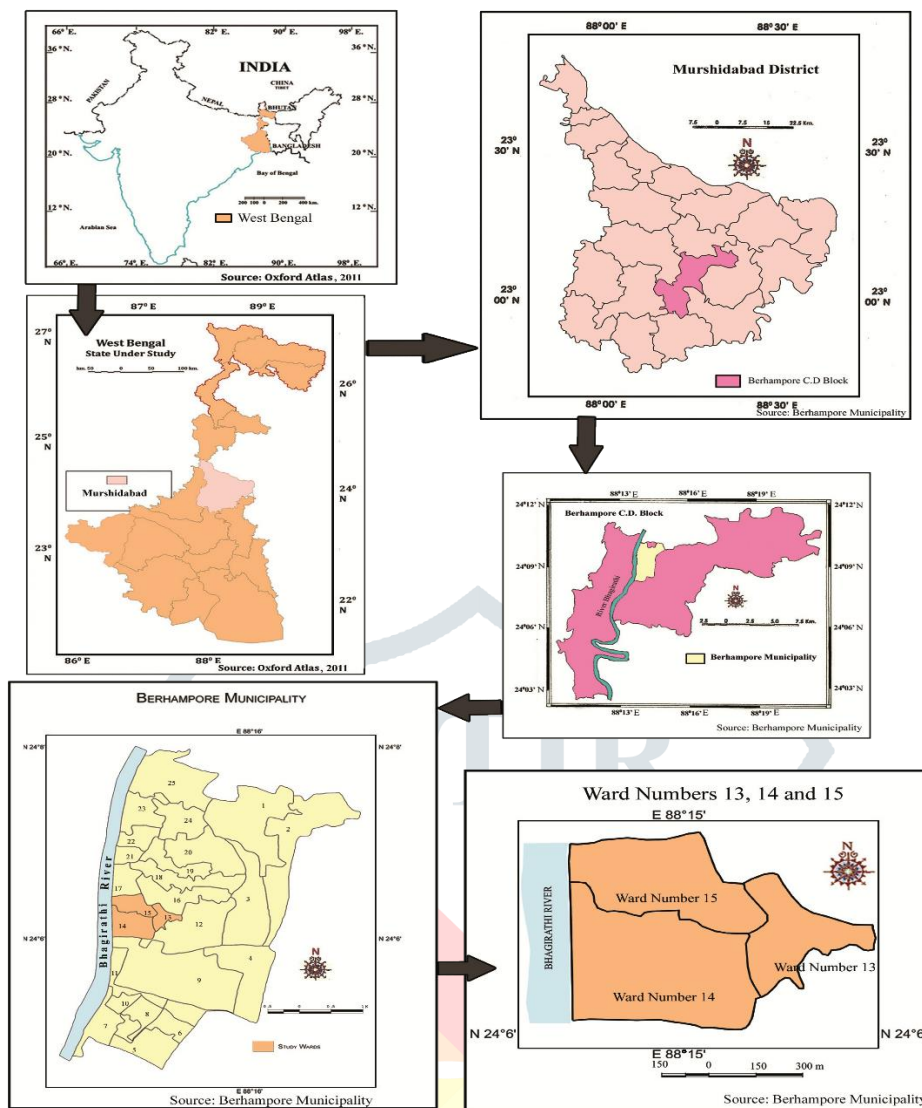


Fig. No. 1: Location Map of the Study Area

DATA BASE:

Both primary and secondary datasets have been collected to lay the foundation for the analytical study. Detailed household survey on the basis of questionnaire schedule has been done to collect adequate primary data. Data related with land holding details along with Ward map have also been collected from Municipality office. The data were collected from the fields by questionnaire survey and as well as from the Municipality office. Census data and municipal records have been utilized as conspicuous secondary data source.

METHODOLOGIES ADOPTED:

The available literatures regarding slums are consulted to make a concrete framework for the dissertation. Then a reconnaissance visit was made to Slum areas of Berhampore Municipality, Ward number 13, 14 and 15 in 2nd week of September, 2017. All the households were enlisted with number of male and female in each of them. This list of households was used to select the sample households in a later stage of the study. Here based on cumulative monthly expenditure of the families, three specific economic groups were identified and thereafter hundred households were surveyed from each target wards of Berhampore Municipality. All the maps are created based on the dataset procured from the master table. The questionnaire-survey was done to get the details on the households. With these maps and questionnaire, a second visit was made to the Slum areas in last week of January, 2018. Both primary and secondary data were collected to lay the foundation for the analytical study. Data have been tabulated in various forms. Diagrammatic representations based on such data have also been made. Analysis has been carried out on the basis of various diagrammatic representations.

SLUMS IN BERHAMPORE:

The slums at Berhampore can be divided into the following categories,

- Slums situated beside the Ganges river
- Slums adjoined with the non-slum locality
- Slums developed in a linear manner beside the rail lines
- Slums of minority community and backward population.

Although Berhampore Municipality has undertaken significant slum development activities in the past but, yet these were piecemeal efforts. But in this present scenario of rapid and modern urbanization and steep population escalation, it is very important to make the efforts comprehensive in nature. Therefore Berhampore Municipality has tried to make a comprehensive and integrated Slum Development plan involving infrastructural, social and livelihood development aspects under different significant development programmes for all the slums.

**FACTS AND FIGURES OBTAINED FROM PERCEPTION SURVEY IN THE STUDY-WARDS
POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS:**

Ward nos. 13, 14 and 15 have been selected in order to get the detailed view of the socio economic condition of the slum dwellers. It is seen from figure that the slum population has been increased during last decade for ward number 14 from 2,615 to 6,580. Whereas the slum population for ward number 13 and 15, has been decreased a lot. For reason of this, it can be said that ward number 14 is just beside the National Highway 34. For good connectivity, people prefer more to live in this place than other wards. And as many other good facilities like Hospital, nearby market, Bus Stop, Educational Institute are over there, people like to stay in this place than other places. That’s why people coming from other places or people living in any other slums, comes to this place in a bulk. For this, the slum population of this place enhances a lot.

It is seen that 40% people are Hindu and 60% people are Muslim of the total surveyed sample population of ward number 13. As this place has many mosques, the Muslim people like to stay in this place. As a religious factor is working here, the percentage of Muslim population in this place is quite high. For ward number 14, it is 75% Hindu population and 25% Muslim population. And in ward number 15, there is 80% Hindu and 20% Muslim population. For the reason, it can be said that after independence, many Hindu people came here from Bangladesh and started living here. They chose the place near the river as their basic occupation was fishing that is fully river-related. That’s why the Hindu population is quite high in the slums beside river like slums of ward number 14 and 15.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS:

The economic condition for the people of slum areas of ward number 13, 14 and 15 in Berhampore municipality has been shown. In ward number 13, it is seen that half of the slum population is above poverty line and another half is below poverty line. As many people of this ward are in business, therefore their income is quite high and the ratio of APL and BPL are almost same here surprisingly. In case of ward number 14, 55% people are BPL and 45% people are APL. Because most of the people in these wards are new migrants and most of them don’t have any job in their hand, that’s why the percentage of BPL persons is quite high in this area. And In case of ward number 15, the BPL people are 45% and APL people are 55%. Here most of the people are old residents of Berhampore and engaged in prestigious and permanent economic activity. For this, the economic condition of this ward is good.

The occupational structure of male slum dwellers and female slum dwellers has been shown. In terms of workers, it is found from the surveyed work that 25% people of the ward number 13, 35% of the ward number 14 and 20% of the ward number 15 are main workers. The other workers are marginal workers. The occupation type broadly reveals that most of the surveyed male persons are engaged in service and are very few in number. Maximum number of the male workers of these slums are Rickshaw puller, Van puller etc. That’s why; they don’t have work in their hand throughout the year. A very few people are engaged in permanent works. They are the main workers. The females are engaged in grocery shops, or in household work in others houses.

Table no. 1: Economic Condition

ward no.	Poverty Level			
	BPL	%	APL	%
13	10	50	10	50
14	9	45	11	55
15	11	55	9	45

Table no. 2: Type of Worker

Ward no.	Main	%	Marginal	%
13	5	25	15	75
14	7	35	13	75
15	4	20	16	80

Source: Primary Survey

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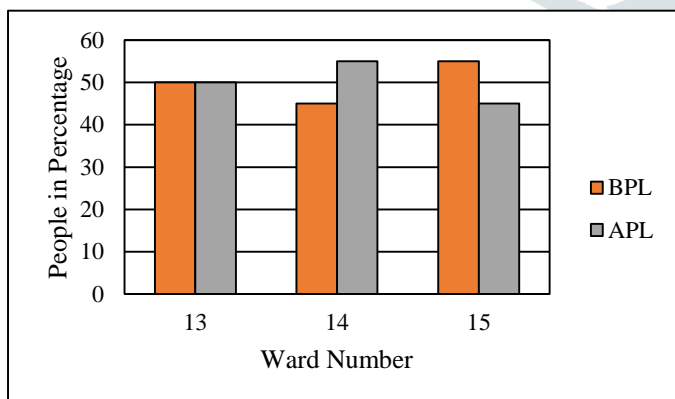


Fig. No. 2: Economic Condition

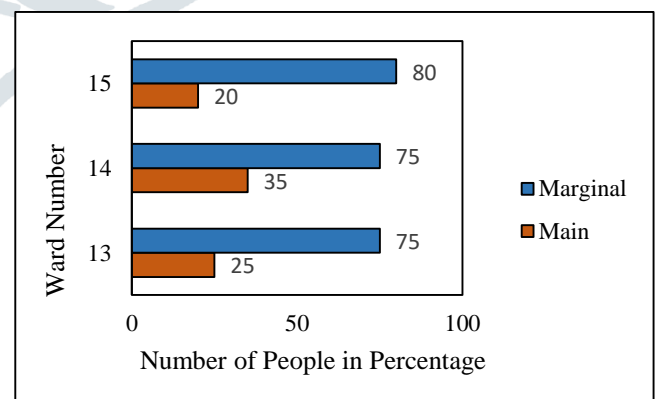


Fig. No. 3: Type of Worker

It is seen that the males are more engaged in economic activities than females in these slums. In ward number 13, 87% workers are male and only 13% workers are females. In case of ward number 14, the male workers are 72% and female workers are 28% and in ward number 15, the percentage is 72 for male and 28 for female. So it can be said that females of ward number 13 are less active in economic activities than other wards. The social barrier is responsible for this. The females are not at all allowed to do work outside like males. They are only allowed to work either in grocery shops or in household works. Some old females work at tea stalls.

The type of economic activity has been shown in figure number 5. It is seen that in ward number 13, half of the people are in secondary activities where another half portion is in tertiary sector of economy. In ward number 14, 40% people are secondary workers and 60% people

are tertiary workers and in case of ward number 15, the secondary workers are 20% where 80% people are in tertiary activity. Most of the slum dwellers are rickshaw puller or green-grocer.

Table no. 3: Gender wise earning members

Ward No.	Male	Male %	Female	Female %
13	28	87.5	4	12.5
14	26	72.22	10	27.78
15	36	72	14	28

Source: Primary Survey

Table no. 4: Type of economic activities

Ward No.	Secondary	Secondary %	Tertiary	Tertiary %
13	10	50	10	50
14	8	40	12	60
15	4	20	16	80

Source: Primary Survey

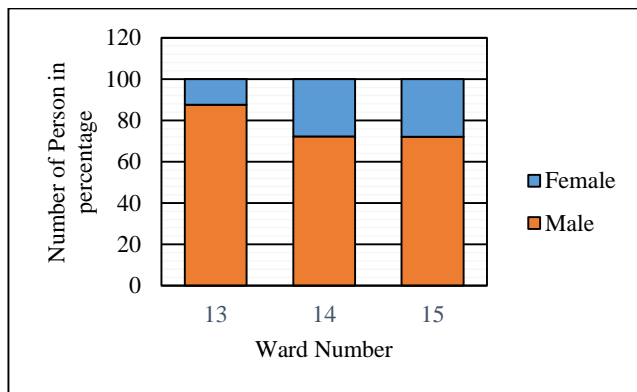


Fig. No. 4: Gender wise earning members

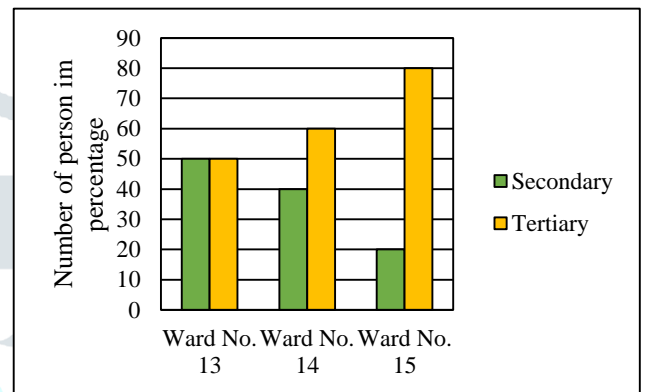


Fig. No. 5: Type of economic activities

From the analyses of the occupation pattern of the people of slum areas, it can be said that more than half of the working population are engaged in small scale and house hold industries in all the wards. The numbers of people who are in business are also very low in these slums. And very few people are found to be in any other service. Because most of the people in slums are uneducated, they can't get a good govt. job. They are engaged in small scale or household industries or in any other small scale business.

Job satisfaction level among people has also been shown. It is seen that all over the slum, most of the people are dissatisfied with their present work. The picture is same in all the wards. As the income of the people is very low, and with this they cannot live happily with their family, they prefer to do a work which is more economically efficient or profitable for them.

Monthly family income has been shown by Figure Number 20. 15% of the surveyed families of ward number 13 have monthly income of less than Rs. 3,000 per month. 50% of the families have family income ranging from Rs. 3,000-6,000 per month and 35% of the families have income more than Rs. 6000. 30% of the surveyed families of ward number 14 have monthly income more than Rs. 3000 per month and 60% families have income between Rs. 3,000-6,000. And in ward number 15, 50% family earns between 3000-6000 and 25% people earn more than Rs. 6,000. In general, the average monthly family income is high amongst the slum dwellers of the ward number 14. Most of the people of these slums are not engaged in any prestigious work. For this, their income level is very low. Few people are there who don't have any work in their hand and their income is nearly Rs. 2,500. Most of the peoples' income lies between Rs. 3,000-6,000, because they are engaged in small scale economic activities. A very few people are in permanent job or engaged in good business whose income is more than Rs. 6,000/month.

From the figure it is seen that in ward number 13, 70% peoples' expenditure is between Rs. 3,000-6,000. And 25% peoples' income is more than Rs. 5,000/month. Very few people are there whose monthly expenditure is less than Rs. 3,000. In case of ward number 14, 15% houses spend less than Rs. 3,000, 50% houses spend Rs. 3,000-5,000. And 35% people spend more than Rs. 5,000/month. In ward number 15, the percentage is 25 for less than 3000/- monthly income group. The number of persons who save money nearly Rs. 500-1,000 per month is also noticeable in the surveyed wards. But a very few people can save money more than 1,000/- per month. Most of the peoples' income is so low that they can save only a very few amount of money after all of his expenditures in every month. But some people, whose earning is quite high, can save money more than Rs. 2000/-.

Table no. 5: Monthly Income in Rs.

Ward no.	<3000	%	3000-5000	%	>5000	%
13	1	5	14	70	5	25
14	3	15	10	50	7	35
15	5	25	11	55	4	20

Source: Primary Survey

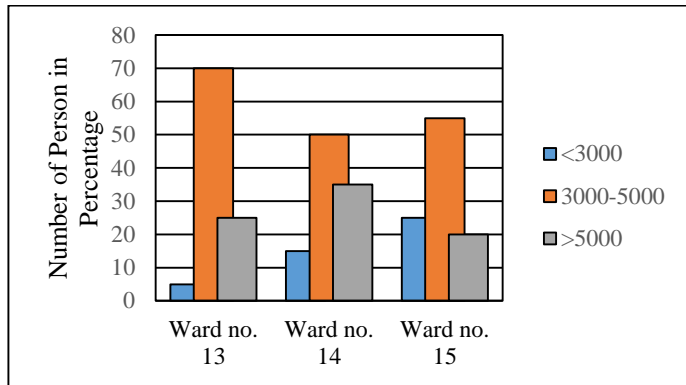


Fig. No. 6: Monthly Income

Table no. 16: Monthly Expenditure in Rs.

Ward no.	<3000	%	3000-6000	%	>6000	%
13	3	15	10	50	7	35
14	2	10	12	60	6	30
15	5	25	10	50	5	25

Source: Primary Survey

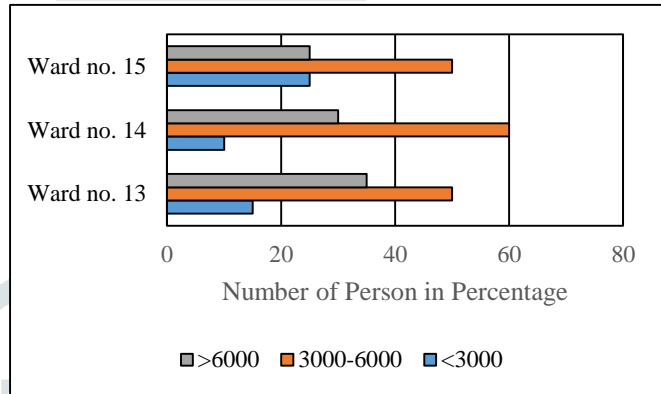


Fig. No. 7: Monthly Expenditure

Most of the people save money in their own custody. But few people save their money in Bank, Post Office and also in chit funds. Most of the peoples' savings is so small, that they cannot save it in any authentic place. That's why they save it in their personal custody.

SUGGESTIONS:

In order to get rid of the aforementioned problems, some suggestions or solution strategies can be put forth and these are as follows:-

- Employment should be done among slum people either in organised or unorganised sectors.
- There should be more encouragements from the local self-government for developing small scale industries.
- Skill development programmes should be done to the people of slum so that they can do different type of economic activities.
- Municipal authority should manage some easy savings policy for the slum people so that they can save some money easily.
- Finally the local self-government should try to increase the level of socio economic condition of urban poor so that the economic condition will also increase along with it.

CONCLUSION:

It can be said that slums of ward number 13, due to its location is much more developed than the slums of ward number 14 and 15. The slum of ward number 13 is lying in the inside area and the slum of ward number 14 and 15 lying in the outer area of Berhampore Municipality

The study reveals that the economic conditions of slums with respect to the selected parameters like percentage of economic condition, type of worker, earning members, economic activities, monthly income and expenditure etc. are better in the slums of the inside area than the slums of the outer area of Berhampore Municipality. Therefore constructive initiative should be taken from the Local Self Government to create parity in this. If some of the non-governmental organisations go hand in hand with the Local Self Government regarding alleviation of the burning socio-economic problems prevalent in the selected slums of Berhampore, then it is expected that within a very few days, the economic malaises will be eradicated up to a great extent and if this reform goes for a considerable time, then in very near Future, the status of this Municipality will be much more glorified.

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