

CHAPTER FOUR

MAJOR PROBLEMS

INTRODUCTION

The area and population of an urban centre increase with the urbanisation of the region. This advancement is the factor for assembling of less advance people who try to utilize the amenities made for the urban dwellers and thus many problems are generated. India and many other developing countries are suffering all the problems of urbanisation, often they have population densities much higher than many western cities. Due to population pressure on the one hand and the marginally improving living standards on the other, the demands for urban services are steadily increasing. The gaps between available urban infrastructure and their demand among the public have been increasing continuously due to resource constraints. There is inequitable distribution of available services among different segments of population and poorer sections. They comprise nearly half of the total urban population and hardly participate in the benefits of the available urban services. Thus, each and every town is facing the problem of deficit and uneven distribution of urban amenities. The town under study has many of such problems some of which are very acute and need attention for identification. The chapter deals with such problems which were identified at the time of field study. These problems can be grouped into physical, socio-cultural, institutional, economic and infrastructural ones. However, in reality, they occur simultaneously in complex interrelations. (Jana, 1980) However, historical background of the town has also played for its backwardness.

4.1. PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

English Bazar is situated on the left bank of the river Mahananda. The general appearance of the past of the area is that of a low-lying plain, sloping gently towards the south presumably in which the river flow. The north-eastern part of the district having characteristics of the barind is an undulating country interspread with ravines.

4.1.1. Land Barrier

River Mahananda has bifurcated the Malda Town with its 20mt. wide and 6.4km. long stretch and act as a physical barrier creating problems. Mahananda bridge

on the river is the only way used for the movement from the eastern part. But the bridge always suffers from traffic jam which creates delay in the movement. At times of the traffic jam over the bridge, the only alternative is to cover a longer path to reach to the northern part of the town from its southern part.

4.1.2. Stagnation of water and Drainage

As the neighbouring areas except the west are higher than the basin. it suffers from poor drainage system. At the time of floods, heavy siltation occurred on the bed of the river. So, agricultural lands are remained submerged with water for a long period and damage major crops. Moreover, communication systems get disrupted totally and affected the drainage intern. The basin is one of the flood-prone areas of the district and flood occurs almost every year. The town is elongated in a north-south alignment along the National Highway 34 and the main river Mahananda (Plate-13).

Floods are common in the region. Some of these are very devastating in nature. Sometimes, a huge amount of crops, animal falks and human lives have been lost in natural calamities. One such flood recently (1978) occurred in the town. The whole English Bazar town remained under water for 15 days. Lakhs of people were homeless and thousands of cattle were washed away is the district. All agricultural crops were damaged and lakhs of people spent their days standing on knee-deep water. The nature of devastations and its other effects can be realised from accompanying photographs. Some times, cultivation of crops is delayed and the production is less. The agricultural operations are also affected by natural calamities.

Principal causes of the floods are : (i) The Mahananda basin suffers acute problem of drainage disposal resulting in stagnation of water for a long period and a little amount of rain at that time causes floods. (ii) Intensive and concentrated rains with short period is responsible for floods in the basin. The rate of down pour exceeds the rate of disposal because of low grading and (iii) Some times floods occur due to heavy discharge of water from barrages of river like Kalindi and Ganga.

Among the natural calamities cyclones are the frequent features in the period during which the S-W Monsoon current prevails. Agricultural operations are also affected by natural calamities. Some of these are very devastating in nature. Some times, a huge amount of crops, animal falks and human lives have been lost in natural calamities.

Farmers in the town very much depend on the Monsoon which is the primary source of water for the cultivation of crops. But monsoon is sometimes uncertain and late in arrival and affects the agricultural operations resulting in low area and production. On the contrary, the agricultural operations are also affected by heavy and concentrated rains which create stagnation of water in the fields and floods.

IMPACT OF THE FLOOD - 1995

The general rainfall of Malda district is low in comparison to other districts of West Bengal. In 1995 at the onset of monsoon the rainfall was fairly good and wide spread. People were very happy on the prospect of good crop. But from 25.09.95 and onwards there was unprecedented heavy rainfall which inundated whole English Bazar town. All roads were under knee deep to chest high water. The estimated rainfall between 25.09.95 and 28.09.95 was 770m.m. which is an all time record of English Bazar. Most of the mud built houses have been grounded. Some old brick built houses have been collapsed. Electricity and water supply system were disrupted. Out of 23 pump houses, fifteen pump houses were inundated by flood water, resulting in damage in machineries. However, with the initiative of West Bengal State Electricity Board Employees and employees of Water Works Deptt. water supply was resumed fully within two days. With the help of district administration, English Bazar Municipality undertook relief operation vigorously. Marooned were rescued and sheltered in schools, colleges and temporarily erected shelters with polythene. Dry foods were provided and "atta", wheat and rice are being distributed among flood victims. The loss of municipal properties are in-repairable unless Government comes out with generous help to this municipality. On a primary assessment it revealed that all roads were damaged. Drainage system has totally collapsed. Markets have been damaged. With the inundation of pump houses the machineries incurred heavy damages. The municipal vehicles are also damaged. For restoration work the require amount is as follows :

Table 4.1 : Tentative cost of Restoration following items (1995)

Sl.No.	Description	Tentative cost of restoration
1.	Roads	Rs. 84.66 lacs
2.	Drain	Rs. 23.90 lacs
3.	Culvert	Rs. 22.50 lacs
4.	Markets	Rs. 24.80 lacs
5.	Water works	Rs. 21.26 lacs
6.	Vehicles	Rs. 1.76 lacs
7.	Electricals	Rs. 0.66 lacs
8.	Sanitation	Rs. 6.05 lacs
9.	Municipal school buildings	Rs. 1.23 lacs
10.	Parks	Rs. 1.20 lacs
		Rs. 188.02 lacs

A part of this have been received from Govt. so the complete work could not be done properly.

Flood - 1998

In 1998 eight out of 25 wards of English Bazar Municipality is under the grip of flood. Preliminary estimate upto 09.09.98 is given Table 4.2. (Plate-14).

Table 4.2 : Tentative cost of Restoration following items (1998).

Sl.	Description	Damaged caused	Tentative Cost of Restoration
1.	Road	5.0 K.M.	15.0 lacs
2.	Drains	2.5 K.M.	9.5 lacs
3.	Community latrine	30 Nos.	3.0 lacs
4.	Tubewell	20 Nos.	1.5 lacs
5.	Street light	20 Poles	1.0 lac
6.	Mud houses	400 Nos.	5.0 lacs
			35.0 lacs



14. Flood - 1998

4.2. INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS

4.2.1. Landuse Problems

Landuse is a burning problem, throughout the country and more so in the vicinity of urban areas, where land has been over used and misused, at the same time the pressure of population on the land has been increasing. There are two problems concerned with landuse viz, intensive use of the land so as to achieve maximum possible profit and changes in landuse from rural to urban which involves the actual loss of land from a particular landuse that should be permissible only after estimating the net loss in terms of its production and exploring the possibilities of its compensation. It is essential to examine the historical and intercessional growth of these towns and class of towns as influenced by sites and situations, pattern of change in urban landuse with an estimate for the future, relationship existing between the morphology and landuse and lastly landuse planning (Ataullah, 1985).

An attempt has been made to study the various categories of landuse together with locational and historical background. Various functions which the town performs have been studied in relation to urban population for the determination of problems created by man to meet their certain requirements. The residential areas cover the majority of the land area in the town with a CBD at the centre. Like most of the towns in the country, the town under study has similar landuse characteristics and mixed pattern.

Comparative figures for various uses also reflect the inconsistency of distribution of quantum of land under various uses. Higher utilization rate can be achieved by vertical development particularly for residential area. Apart from these facts, this town suffers from disparities in terms of densities, amenities and service. These inconsistencies need to be minimized in the future development of them on the basis of Development Plan, which should spell out the proposals in this respect.

4.2.2. Inter-relationship of Different Uses

The landuse pattern, which has presently emerged, is an outcome of successive decisions both conscious and unconscious, formal and informal taken during the past. The outcome is reflected through the existing landuse pattern. Even a glance of the existing landuse map gives an impression that land-use pattern evolved till this date is not satisfactory. Like all other Indian cities, the city centre is the main hub of multifarious activities. Many activities have found their places

in this hub even though they do not form compatible relationship with commercial, residential and other uses in the areas. The saw mills and timber godowns are located at eastern part of the city along with State High way (N.H. 34), but in close proximity of the residential areas as the essential requirements for saw mills and timber godowns, railway siding and proper accessibility from the regional roads are common there.

4.2.3. Incompatible Landuse

A detailed land-use survey together with studies in respect of traffic, living conditions etc. have reflected some land-uses as incompatible. The basic considerations for identifying these uses have been performance characteristics of land-uses, nature of industries and workshop, traffic hazards, incongruous nature of the use with the surrounding areas.

4.2.4. In efficient Landuses

Some of the Government offices, educational institutions and others are functioning at places which are not suitable for these activities. Moreover in some cases the land which is at present utilised by them can be utilised much more efficiently for other uses. Some landuses which are considered as inefficient are : whole sale fish trading at Netaji market, Potato and Onion whole sale market of Netaji Market. Again Govt. and private offices, Rail hospital, slums are located on railway lands.

4.2.5. Selection of Norms and their Application

For allocating appropriate proportions of land to different uses, the norms selected are based on Webster (1958), supplemented by Indian standard. Normally Webster standards have been followed, but variations have been allowed keeping in view the needs of the towns and their neighbouring regions.

The main problem of residential area is lack of space and over-congestion around the CBD. In developing countries, the cities are facing a problem of over-crowding which is the result of the high intensity of residential landuses. Overcrowding again is reflected in the densities of houses and households (Yadav, 1979). According to Webster, in the average city about 49% of the developed area is in residential use. The India standard for this use is also the same. In English Bazar town it is 53.7% and is above the average. The greatest problem or short-coming in this use is very high density in some areas of the central zone. As a result of uncontrolled sprawl and unplanned development, such high densities

have come to exist at the cost of proper road widths and essential civic amenities. There are many pockets of slum and blighted areas. The other shortcoming of this use is its mixture with industrial and commercial uses at the centre of all the towns.

In commercial areas, the establishments have encroached residential houses. The problems in importance arising out of this use is its mixture with residential use in the city centre and the presence of godowns and wholesale markets there, that is leading again to traffic congestion and insanitary conditions. The most important and common deficiency in commercial land use is its unbalanced distribution, which is the result of its unplanned growth. People living far away from city centre have to travel a long distance to purchase even the articles of day-to-day use. By encouraging regional shopping centres, this short-coming may be overcome easily.

By any standard the town under study lag far behind others in respect of industrial land use. An average percentage of developed land devoted to this use is only 4 to 6 in the town and 10 to 15% according to Webster standard for an average city. The low percentage of such use recorded by the town under consideration is because of lack of resources and absence of raw materials needed for large industries. The industries are scattered every where including in the commercial and residential zones. The major shortcomings in industrial land use are the small amount of land devoted to this use and its mixture with residential and commercial land uses.

On an average 5-6% area of the town is devoted to public and semi Public land uses, This should be at least 16-22% keeping in view of Indian standard. The problem of ill-distribution and shortage of space are also observed. The institutions are distributed very unevenly and usually at misfit sites. The educational zone in the town, situated at congested locality at city centre, is likely to face greater problem of space in near future. The main problem of this use is that the educational and medical institutions are distributed unsuitably which reveal misuse of land. Administrative offices lie either at the centre of the town or are scattered haphazardly. Thus, there is a need to develop a secondary administrative zone.

Urban land uses expand at a cost of open space. So, if the municipal areas of the town are not extended, open space will decrease continuously. The low percentage of open space in the town under study points to the fact that the

town will become very congested. An unhappy consequence is also seen that park space is not only inadequate but poorly distributed. In theory, an effort should be made to distribute these public areas over the city in accordance with the population pattern, but in practice political and market consideration often cause spatial inequalities and major amount of park land is found in one or two holdings. The general planning standard for parks and playgrounds space is given as a ratio of hectare to population unit. This ratio is one hectare of park-playground area to each 250 persons, although few communities have realized this standard. On an average 28.1% of the developed areas of the central city is devoted to streets (Bertholomew. 1955).

The expected future landuse and population projection for the year 2001 show that the town, which is and congestions will be rising in future. If the urban area is not extended and different landuses are not allocated properly, the landuse pattern will be very unbalanced and irregular. Coming to the congestion of the town, the central areas are already congested and need thinning out. The population estimate for the year 2001 shows that the population is expected to increase by 15 to 20 percent. This is bound to add to the congestion of the town enormously.

An increase in population will have a direct effect on the expansion and congestion of residential areas. The rate of house construction is not likely to keep pace with that of population. Hence, the pressure of population of houses will also increase rapidly. This is likely to result in the creation of more slums. Thus, proper planning for development of balanced land uses is needed in the town. This will help in checking the irregular distribution of different functions and in providing good civic amenities to the urban inhabitants.

4.3. ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

It is necessary to note that town dwellers play an import role in establish and running the functions which are part and parcel of urban life. Their actions and decisions virtually control employment, income, levels of demand and prices of commodities an well as aspects of economic life of the town. Again, their drive for achievement does not lead one into socially useful activities or project. Instances are not uncommon in which absence of their conscience are observed that lead their in to their success in crimes These motives inherent among a section of people in English Bazar town lead to quiet growth of smuggling, deforestation as well an vices like smuggling gang fight, local hoodlum. They engaged in selling smuggling goods which are brought from Bangladesh and

Nepal. This town has grown up unplanned and spread haphazardly. The result is the present urban mess, too many students in the school, too much sludge for the sewerage, too many trucks on the road, too many sick in the hospitals, too much crime for the police and too many commuters for the transport.

Still, there is the hope. In such an increasingly hazardous and complex society, that the social and economic fluidity can be maintained against the chaotic forces that challenge it. It is still the market place for goods and ideas, the focus of contractual society, the mirror for emulation, the meeting place of diversities and the centre of culture.

4.3.1. Socio-economic Problems

The other problems constitute the medical, educational, administrative, recreational etc. The main problem associated to these functions is their uneven and unscientific spatial distribution in the town. Generally, the institutions of the respective group are established without giving proper consideration to the need and potentiality of the surrounding areas. For example, the hospital in the town is confined to some particular area which makes other parts unattended and untouched by the medical facilities. Likewise, the distribution of education centres too have very uneven distributional pattern. It is found that often the students have to come after kilometres of walk to a part of the city where these facilities are available in a limited surroundings. Generally the administrative functions are located in highly scattered manner causing great inconvenience to the public. Most of them are situated in rented houses in the residential areas. Again most of them are away from the bus routes.

Schools and college have students more than their capacity and area centres of continuous, problems. These institutions have an uneven distributional pattern in the town under study. They are almost confined to the western part of English Bazar Municipality. Lack of industrial training institutes to train the local people in various work e.g. carpentry, electrician, smithy, welding etc. to meet the growing demands and local needs is a chronic problem. The infrastructure in many primary schools is very poor. Children in some primary schools still use to sit on the floor. The medical and health facility in the town are far from satisfactory. The Government hospital functions with several mismanagement and is very dirty. Not only that, some of the departments in Malda Sadar Hospital are now remaining closed due to several shortcomings. Insufficiency of beds and vehicles are the other noteworthy problems of the hospital. The post and telegraph services are very poor and unevenly distributed in the town. In fact, about 60% population



15. Front view of town hall

enjoy this facility comfortably and others are situated at a distance of more than 2 km. from their nearby post office. The extension of postal services is needed with a view to enhance the development process in all areas in recent years.

4.3.2. Socio-Cultural Problems

4.3.2.a. (a) Population Pressure : High density of population per km² shows that the pressure of population in the town is comparatively high. The percentage of population engaged in Govt., Semi Govt. job is increasing year after year thereby resulting in high pressure of population.

4.3.2.2 (b) Concentration of Backward Population : About 18.5% of the total population of the town belong to backward classes. Of which 15% are scheduled castes and 5% are scheduled tribes. These minority groups of people in urban areas are very often found to settle in most under developed localities. Owing to their low income and poor standard of living, they prefer to reside in old blighted residential area where livelihood is less costly.

4.3.2.3. (c) Inadequate Educational Facilities : Among the different qualities of population, literacy perhaps is the most important. A low degree of literacy is an obstacle to economic growth. The most basic minimum measurement of educational status is the degree of literacy. But it is very difficult to measure the degree of literacy in accurate terms. Schools and College have students more than their capacity and are centres of continuous problems. These institutions have an uneven distributional pattern in the town under study. They are almost confined to the whole part of the town.

4.3.2.4. Problem related to trade and commerce

The whole sale markets of food grains and fishes are located at the heart of the city which attracts heavy traffic movement throughout the day. It involves with considerable amount of loading and unloading of carriage vehicles, packing and transshipment of goods to different modes of vehicles. Due to insufficient space inside the shops or godwans foot paths are used as storing place which force the pedestrians to walk on the streets. The centrifugal force exerted by the old established business core led to high congestion of shops along very narrow roads in the heart of the city. This type of development has led to overflow of traffic which is an unsuitable atmosphere for customers. The worn-out and old type of residences in the commercial core have almost marred the look of the area. Some problems have cropped up in trade and commerce in English Bazar. The main problems are : (i) congestion, (ii) lack of space, (iii) pressure on

residential houses, (iv) poor communications within the town and (v) the monopoly in some trading items by the traders. These problems not only hinder the development of the town but also the environmental and living conditions of the people. Poor people are driven away from their place of residence to other areas or are compelled to live in odd conditions.

4.4. ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM

- (A) **Problem related to living condition**
- (B) **Lack of community facilities**

The combination of elements of environmental are directly aiding the living of the good lives. With the growth of population in the city and the various activities by the people, the environment becomes gradually crippled due to the non-availability of renewed resources and is served with inadequate elements of environment. "Solid Waste" now is used internationally arise from domestic, trade, commerce, construction activities. It comprises countless different materials in relation to the physical characteristics of the city refuse. The problem is aggravated by the rag pickers whose economy depend on city garbage as they screen out and collect the marketable elements from the garbage which includes clothes, metals, glass, plastic etc. They are also the cause to spread garbage on the streets.

There are potential risks to health and environment from improper tackling of solid waste, Firstly, it directly affects the field workers. Secondly, the accumulated garbage is the breeding ground of disease reactor, flies and rats. The area-pollution is caused by the germ generated from the garbage. Uncontrolled and unorganised city waste not only creates ugliness of the city but more seriously transfers the polluted materials to air and water. The river water and sub-surface water are vulnerable to the pollutant which is used by the consumers and there by creating intestinal diseases. With high moisture in the climate of the city and with the rain, garbages get into the gully pits which not only chokes the drainage system but also gets purified. The materials also create environmental pollution when silt is lifted disposal of these wastes is a major problem for the town. Garbage and rubbish tend to be dumped, and converted into land fill at the minimum distance commensurate with public opinion. As long as the procedure removes the refuse and as long as the disposal site is not a health hazard and does not offend aesthetic values too greatly, the operation is considered successful. However, the side effects on health, the atmosphere, the soil, water bodies and the appearance of the landscape may be considerable especially in terms of pests, smoke, dust, odours, blowing paper and polythene, water pollution

and increased lorry traffic. Each particular kind of waste has particular disposal problem, bricks and building stone being useful full-material for example, but all the rubbish tend to be dumped together. Other methods of solid waste disposal offer opportunities to sort and recover waste.

In many cases the dump sites are located indiscriminately where land could be obtained for this purpose. In some such dumps the refuse is piled as high as equipment will permit, while, in others it is periodically levelled and compacted. Burning of wastes to reduce their volume has been a common practice, but is now often not allowed by air pollution control regulations. Generally, little is done at open dumps to prevent the nuisance and health hazards associated with such dumps.

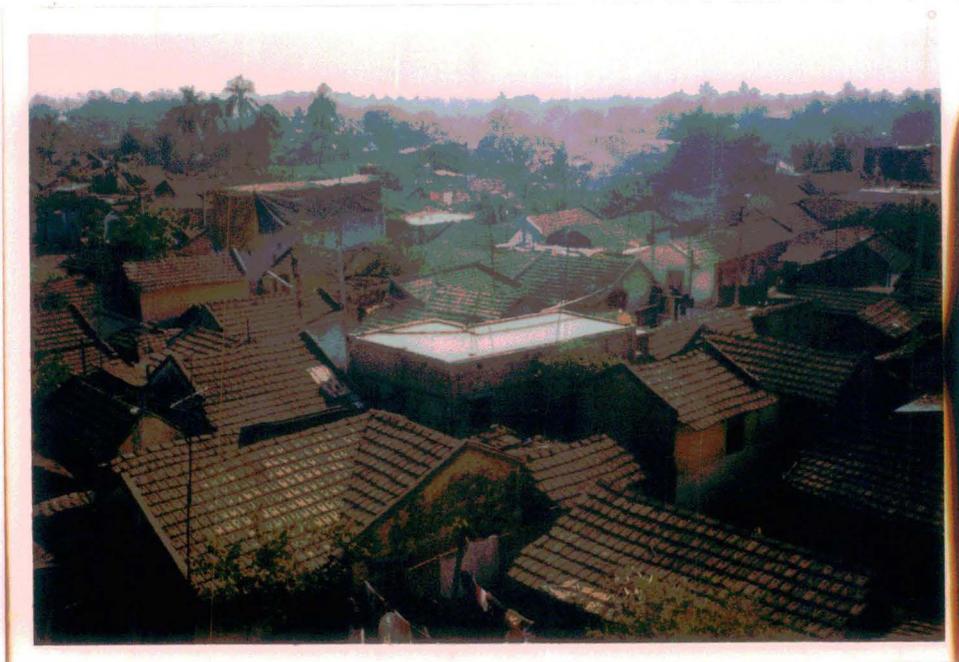
The river Mahananda in English Bazar town carry raw sewage created by the people. These form potential pollution fields in the town. The system of waste disposal followed created disease risks through insects and micro-organisms. Pit systems adjacent to the household in many cases are used as the latrine in some wards. Bucket systems for individual household as a part of municipal 'night-soil' collection system is used in the town. These system may lead to contamination of ground water especially during the rainy seasons. Often, due to insufficient land for proper waste disposal, materials are discharged directly into the nearest water course. Such as situation thus become very conducive to the spread of disease such as cholera, typhoid and dysentery. This is particular is likely to occur in squatter settlements where crowding and lack of money to make better provision make the risk of disease highest and its impact the most severe (Douglas, 1983).

4.4.1. Slum Problem

Compared to other problems, the one associated with slums has assumed serious proportions in the town. Due to overcrowding in a very small tracts of land, unhygienic conditions; filthy surroundings; lack of proper lighting, roads and drinking water, much stush pools as breeding grounds of mosquitoes, these habitations look like veritable hell. In such surroundings crime, vices, diseases and illiteracy consistently show higher incidence of their occurrence. They also abound in mental disorders, alcoholism, immorality, heinous crimes etc. So, study of this problem related to living conditions, occupations and amenities has become necessary. Many factors responsible for the growth of slums in the town are: (1) absence of adequate housing facilities (2) poor wage for the



16. Congested houses in the slums (Buraburitala)



17. Congested houses in the slums (Gorapir)



18. A view of slum in Buraburitala

temporary unskilled labourers (3) high value of land due to commercial importance. (4) population explosion as well as unemployment (5) vested interests (6) negligency of the Government.

4.4.1a. SLUM DWELLERS

The growth of slums is another important feature of this town. The municipal area of English Bazar is divided into 24 wards. In this spatial distribution most of the slums are confined to certain wards while other wards are free of them. In seven wards, there is no slums. These wards represent economically the best parts of the town. The percentage slum dwellers can be seen from Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 : Percentage of Slum dwellers to total in the wards.

Percentage to total	Category	No. of total Wards
< 10	Very low	8
11-20	Low	3
21-30	Moderate	4
31-40	High	1
> 40	Very high	1
Total		17

In terms of the number of slum families living in respective wards, a size classification has been made. The study shows that there are 86 families living in slums of ward IV, Similarly ward XII have 44 and XVII 2% slum families, respectively. In wards XVIII,XX, and XIX have 53 families each and in ward XXII-40 has slum families. Actually slums have grown up outside of the developed urban areas. There the availability of land is very low which keeps the price high with a high standard of living.

The number of slum families has increased in ward III, XIII and XXI each consisting 118, II and 119 families. The number increases further in ward I, II, VII, VIII, IX with 321, 250, 336, 362, 301 families respectively. The wards are situated in south eastern part of the municipality. Here ward II is mainly covered with paddy field, wheat fields and mango gardens. In ward VII, slum families are found in the southern portion, while in ward VIII they are mainly found near the Mahananda river. On the river bank slum families are highly concentrated on the Bundh road. They have also grown on the burning ghat road, in Baluchar I and Baluchar II which belong to ward IX.



18. A view of slum in Buraburitala

Ward XXII has 523 slum families concentrated and they are in Talipukur, Bishghar coloney and along the Rail line. After 1983, this area came under the municipality which contains a number of mango orchards. Ward XXIV has 1888 slum people and they have concentrated in this remote part of the town. But now town has been extended to cover this ward. Slum families are found here in Buraburitala and Ghorapir south. From the analysis it has been seen that the slum families are very unevenly distributed in English Bazar Municipality.

The number of people living in the slum in English Bazar vary widely from the lowest of 137 persons to the highest 9441 persons between different wards. According to the data available, ward XVII has the lowest number of 137 persons which is mainly a market area. The number increases slightly, ranging between 204 and 431 people in wards XXII, XII, XVIII, XIX and IV. Among which first and the last ward have the lowest and the highest number of persons living in slums. The number increases further in wards XXI, XIII, III and VII with a variation of 548 to 681 heads.

It is however, in wards II, I, VIII, IX and XXIV that slum population is still larger ranging from 1296 to 9441 heads. The last one having the highest record for the town number of slum family and its population.

Table 4.4. : Distribution of wards according to percentages of slum dwellers.

Percentage of slum dweller to total	Category	Ward No.	No of Ward	Percentage to total no. of
Nil	-	V,VI, X,XI XIV,XV,XVI	7	29.17
<10	Very low	III,XII,XVII,XVIII XIX,XX,XXI,XXII	8	33.33
11-20	Low	IV, VII, XIII	3	12.50
21-30	Moderate	I, II, VIII, IX	4	16.66
31-40	High	XXIII	1	4.17
>40	Very high	XXIV	1	4.17
Total		24	24	100.00

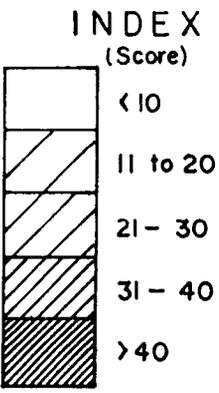
Slums are found along the river bed of Mahananda as well as along the railway tract in the town. These have grown up on public lands, belonging to the Municipality, the State Irrigation Department or the Railway Authority. It is noticed that six out of seven migrant families came from outside the state of West Bengal



19. A view of slums under the flyover

PERCENTAGE OF
SLUM DWELLERS
TO TOTAL

ENGLISH BAZAR TOWN



SCALE



Fig. 4-1

and more than one-third from the adjoining state of Bihar, 1/3 from Bangladesh and remaining 1/4 from other states like U.P. Orissa and Nepal. Hardly one out of seven migrant families came from the same district. About two-thirds of the migrants came from Bihar and Bangladesh. The reasons for migration are the attraction of better employment, rehabilitation, social discrimination, indebtedness, better quality of life as well as other causes.

4.4.1.b. DEMOGRAPHY IN THE SLUMS

(i) Living Condition : The houses in the slum have presented a poor picture. It is found that 94.3% of houses in the slums are kuncha, 2.6% semi-pucca and remaining 3.1% are pucca (Plate 15,16). The kuncha houses are not only prone to fires but it is also impractical to electrify such houses. As per survey, 68.3% of the houses are just one room structure. Hardly 14% of them have separate kitchen space. The poor residential situation of slums also deteriorates the living condition of residential areas adjacent to them. Inadequacy of space force the slum dwellers to sleep on the street pavements as well as under the shades of shops.

(ii) Occupation : The occupational pattern of the inhabitants of the slums reveals that 80% of the total working force are daily earners and are engaged in very low level of work. Remaining force do not perform a job of low standard. As a whole, people here belong to low income group. Over 40% of them has a monthly income of less than Rs. 200/- and only 10% have Rs. 600 or above. The low earning of the working force compel them to earn by illegal sources such as liquor making or some other work. The activities form constant headache of the administrative authorities as well as people living adjacent to the slums.

4.4.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION IN SLUMS

4.4.2a. Education : From the information of various agencies it is found that 25% children attend school. The overwhelmingly majority children are kept away from school for various reasons. Particularly the guardians of the majority children in the slums prefer to engage their kids in earning money than to send them to schools. No doubt this practice encourages social pollution and degradation.

4.4.2b. Health : The economic condition of 90% of the households have compelled them to avail the services of Government hospitals and dispensaries for treatment. Among the slum dwellers only 25% use to go for inoculation or vaccination of their children. The unawareness of the slum dwellers about the health preservation lead to extravagant habits. As such, the slums are affected by diseases that spread in epidemics which also affect the men residing nearby.



20. Grazing place in a residential area
causing poor hygienic condition

4.4.2c. Water supply : Among the total households in the slums, 80% depend upon the neighbouring ponds. Another 12% of the households use water from handpumps and remaining 8% fetch water from the near by municipal taps. Thus, the sunkwell is the major source of water supply to the slums. As a consequence of high concentration of population, in the slums occasional acute shortage of drinking water is prevailed. Because the water table of the sunkwell fall in dry period. As a result, many people depend on the existing sanitary wells. In such cases, they collect water from the roadside stanposts. But the number of stand posts is inadequate compared to demand.

4.4.2d. Sanitation : Among the total households in the slums, 75% defecate in the open spaces, 18% use their own toilet, 3% use community latrines and 4% make use of other modes. Unhealthy sanitation system is highly detrimental to the environmental condition of the locality.

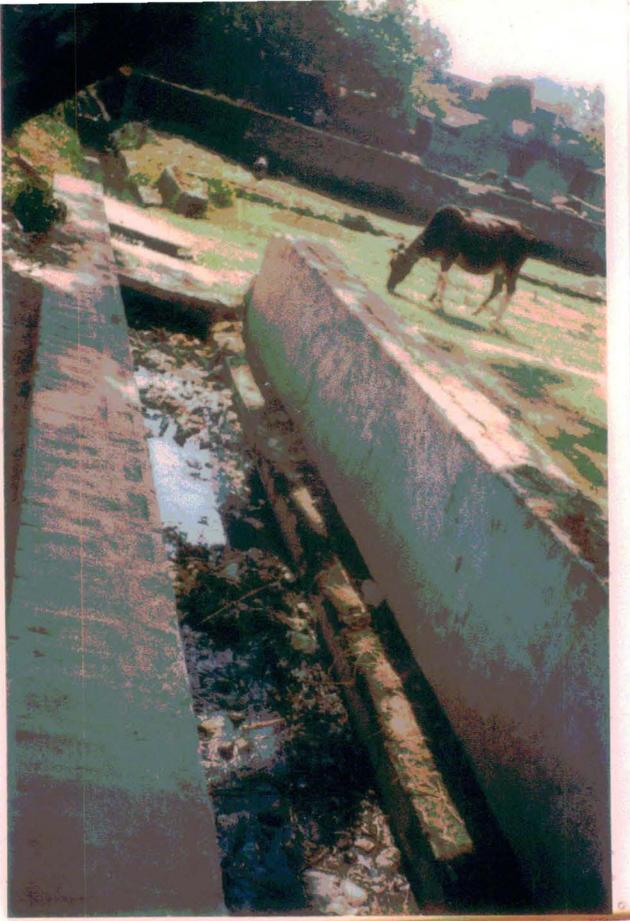
4.5. OTHER PROBLEMS

4.5.1. Drinking water Problem

It is, really astonishing that there is no proper organised system of water supply to the inhabitants of the English Bazar town till today. The main source of water in the town is the private wells. There is a cry for purified drinking water and P.H.E. with its limited water supply system serves a little percentage of the total need. Only 10% of the area are provided with protected water supply. Again, the supply of water having proper treatment are not equitably distributed all over the town.

The actual available water to the citizen is far below the per capital demand. There are also considerable leakage from the old distribution mains, wastage by the consumers, constant flow of water from street standposts etc. In addition, there are some hydraulic deficiency where distribution of water is unequal, and some people are getting more water whereas other areas suffer from shortage. Again there is not a single tap having the stop-cock resulting in continuous flow of water during the supply.

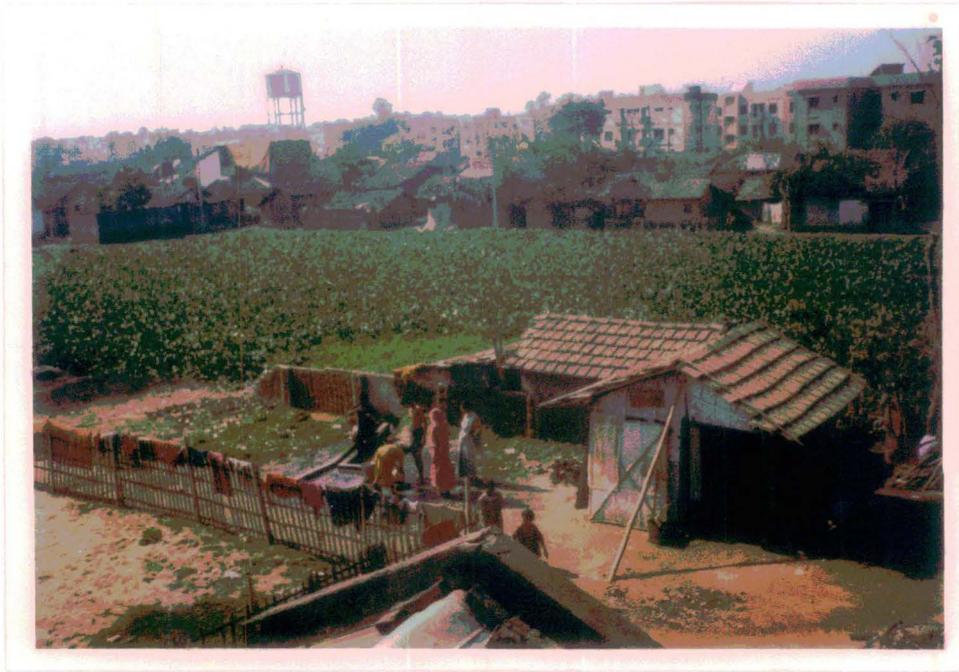
Since availability of surface water is less, under ground water is required to be supplied. Due to presence of iron in the water, the under ground water is not as clear as one likes it to be. As such there is certain degree of public apathy in accepting this water. During the summer months, fresh water becomes scarce. Long queues of buckets are to be seen at water standposts to procure water. Pumping of water from the river becomes irregular as the water level of the river lowers and the river shrinks. Many wells are seen almost dried up.



21. A portion of a drain in the town



22. Housing complex in the town



23. Pond with water hygienic in the central part of the town.

In the town, ward V and VI have been suffering from scarcity of drinking water for a long time. To meet the need, some wells have already been dug. But most of them remain out of order for a couple of months in every year. A water project was formulated for the first time during the British rule in 1943 to cater to the demand of ten thousand persons. Later, with an increase of population in the town, 3 reservoirs were constructed in 1976 by P.H.E. But the entire area of I-XII wards are still deprived from sufficient drinking water.

4.5.2. Transport Problem

Transport always plays a dominant role in directing the urban form and the structure of the town. The growth of any town, its trade and commerce, are intimately dependent on its transport network. But in India, urban transport in many cities have reached crisis proportion and English Bazar is no exception to it. Among all the problems, this town face at the moment, traffic and transportation problems which have become most acute and the point of greatest concern for every dweller. English Bazar town since its origin in the last century has a continuous flow of immigration with an increase of population, number as well as types of vehicles are on the rise. The roads do not follow any definite pattern and create a maze like network which imposes great hindrance to the mass transit system. The most aggravating traffic and transport problems of this town are highlighted as follows :

1. The major roads are concentrated in the heart of the town only where the commercial activities are restricted.
2. Narrow roads are incapable of both ways heavy traffic and cause frequent traffic congestions. The crisis aggravates owing to the encroachment of the footpaths. The hawkers and vendors and the mushroom growths of unauthorised shops have narrowed the roads. Further, in the central commercial area, loading and unloading operations by different transport agencies and car parkings on the road cause traffic jam. Hapazard parking of trucks along the roads narrow down the width of the roads in different parts of the town. Every day 3000 loaded heavy vehicles are passing through this town and more than 40% stay for the considerable time for different reasons. Moreover, more than 500 local trucks park inside the town on and along the roads.
3. Within the town, rickshaws, autos, vans are the public transport and these slow moving vehicles create traffic jams. About 10 thousand rickshaws play in the town daily.

4. Such severely damage prone nature is a common feature of majority of the roads in the town. Along the station road, in its various sections, formation of deep trenches are very common.

Since Independence, traffic on this road though increased, no improvement or extension of the road has been made so far. Formation large and deep hollows especially in the approach of Mahananda bridge are noticed and these have been increasing in extent. Moreover, majority of the roads such as Manaskamana Road, Station Road, B.S. Road, K.J. Syanal roads, in the town are narrow and meandering. As such vehicles along these roads are not able to move easily. Traffic jam and congestion are also noticed at Rathbari More. Infront of State bus stand, parking of the buses and rickshaws make the real width of the road narrow.

5. People of the town become confused about the authority as well as liability of some roads of the town. Most of the main through fares and roads are not maintained by the respective departments and they try to escape their responsibility taking the opportunity of peoples ignorance about the actual authority to English Bazar.

6. English Bazar town station condition are not so good. In 1984 Malda town station had been the Divisional Headquarters of Eastern Railway. The size and height of the town railway platform have not been extended. As such the railway passengers are compelled to face problems on boarding the trains. As a consequence, accidents take place frequently. In addition the Malancha Pally level crossing located outside the town cause long queue of vehicles.

4.5.3. Electricity Problems

The electricity system in these town is not at all satisfactory. Everyday many complaints are received from the people regarding failure of lights. Due to short of voltage and load-shedding, the illuminating of lights has been a great problem. About 30% of street lights in the town are remained disorder. More street lights are required to meet the demand for public safety. But maintenance of street lights is extremely poor. In many cases the light posts are without lamps for a considerable period of time and the civic administration do not care about their duties in this respect. In fact, the existence presence of street lights helps to a great degree to check the undesirable activities or accidents. But as the authority is not so much concerned about this, the anti-social activities or crimes at nights are increasing day by day in the town. The sufferings due to the absence of



24. Modern bus terminus on central part of English Bazar Town

street lights, increase greatly during the rainy season and the roads become death-traps for poor condition.

As a matter of fact, a vast area of the town remain in darkness which is detrimental to public safety. In slum areas like Buraburitala, Ghorapir, Mission ghat, etc. extension of street lights are essential and State Electricity Board is requested to extend the street lights in those areas. But State Electricity Board could not do the needful in the matter. More over, the services of the S.E.B. in maintaining the existing arrangements of the street lights are not satisfactory.

4.5.4. Drainage and Sewrages Problems

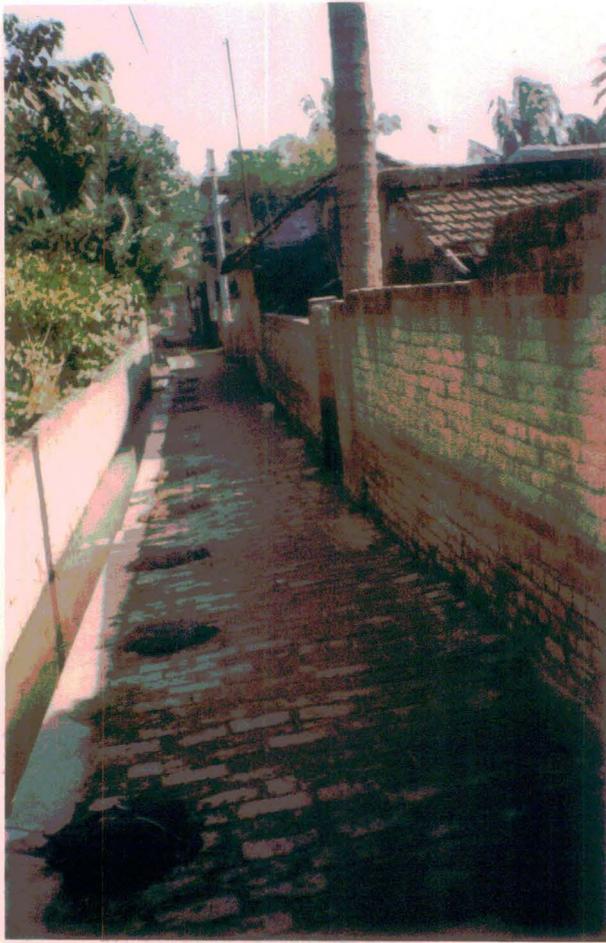
The drainage system of this town is in improvised form. No scientific drainage system has not been developed, it is necessary to draw a comprehensive plan after proper survey of the town and outlet of all liquid pollutants should be drained out through Lakshmipur drainage system. The whole drainage system of English Bazar town is most unscientific and need to be overhauled throughly. While necessity of drainage master plan for improvement of drainage system but for maintaining and improvement of the present drainage system, an immediate of Rs. 3.00 crores should be made.

Seven out falls of Malda town, through which liquid wastes are being disposed to the river Mahananda which ultimately leads to the River Ganges are as follows:

- (i) at Fulbari to river Mahananda
- (ii) at Baluchar to river Mahananda
- (iii) at Mission Gaht to river Mahananda
- (iv) at Gayeshpur to river Mahananda
- (v) at Sarju Prasad to river Mahananda
- (vi) at D.S.A. to river Mahananda
- (vii) at Nunbahi to Bhatia Loke and partly to Ganga through a linked canal during rainy season.

As such, no scientific drainage system is existing in the town. It is necessary to draw a comprehensive plan after proper survey of the town and outlet of liquid waste shall be drained out through Lakshmipur drainage basin which has already been approved and preliminary work has started.

In the town, the river embankments and the N.F.Railway track form the main drainage barriers. Even after a medium shower extensive areas in almost the entire town become water logged and it is a very common incident. The principal water-logging and drainage congestion areas are :



25. Existence of road and drain in a close view which causes danger to the pedestarin



26. Bank crossing by river Manananda

(a) Court area is a basin like area lying near the embankments of river Mahananda, without any drainage point. The badly water logged pockets are areas in the hospital and hospital quarters and near Central Jail.

(b) The north eastern part of the area between the river Mahananda and Railway line upto Old Malda bridge has a little adverse slope. The northernly drains are not able to carry storm run-off, So the entire rainfall flows in the south, following the natural ground slope and results in water logging in the area and further south.

Regarding solid waste, trenching ground has already been located near Malda Aerodrome for dumping purpose. Sewarage treatment plants, power plants with solid waste / recycled waste as a raw material and adoption of other eco-friendly measures are also required to be set up.

4.5.5. Problem of Conservancy

The conservancy service is not sufficient compared with total population of the town. Sometimes lack of responsibility of the authority in removing garbage from the road side and keeping the drains clean are noticed. The absence of good conservancy services has made the town quite, unhygienic. The drainage condition is very poor because of the absence of provision for adequate drainage in the town. The dirty water flows directly to the streets from the houses resulting in most undesirable conditions for the roads and the residents. As the conservancy services can be treated an essential services to make town life health their, it is questionable how far the actual progress has been made by the municipality in tune with the increase of population in these towns?

Service latrines still forms a predominant method of waste disposal. The recently constructed houses generally provide for septic-tanks, but these are not built to be adequately water proof. The location of the tanks in relation to the wells often makes them potential sources of contamination of drinking water. Garbage disposal is equally inadequate, there being only a few dustbins. As a result, heaps of refuse can be found everywhere by the main roadside. Removal of the garbage also is not regular. The burning ghats are situated on the riverside and in crowded area leading to various problems.

Domestic waste water contains organic and inorganic matter in suspended, colloidal and soluble states in varying proportions. Various constituents of waste water are potentially harmful to the environment or to public health of the town. The unauthorised slaughter house in the residential area is creating

environmental pollution. Scarp from these slaughter houses is thrown on the roadside as well as in the drains. This kind of activity causes bad smell and pollutes the air of those residential areas.

4.5.6. Problems related to living condition

This problem is the most gigantic and speedily increasing in magnitude because of continuous increase in population and comparatively slow pace of newer establishments. This has led to congestion, lack of space, over crowding and emergence of slums and blighted areas. One of the major reasons for the lack of space can be attributed to the undersirably large space owned by the private buildings or palacial abodes accommodating comparatively a sparse density of population. Low income groups often corresponding with the lower castes add to the growth of slums and congestion in the residential units developed with higher density of population. The sad plight is further increased by the dirty and unhygienic conditions in the low income group areas. At the time of field survey it was found that walls of two adjacent buildings are almost touching each other due to lack of control and reluctance of the local body over building by-laws and construction activities. This has led to abnormally high residential density within the municipal area.

4.5.7. Lack of community facilities

Open space which usually are used by the town-dwellers as park and playground in the town is limited. Moreover these parks and playgrounds are the meeting places for the public as well as for holding festivals and other social activities. Existing parks are not adequate and at the same time located in the odd areas of the town so sometimes dwellers of the localities cannot avail. The opportunity from the open spaces. The number of auditoriums and public halls are very few compared to the high demand of the town dwellers. As a result, staging of shows or cultural functions have been delayed for lack of dates from the authorities, Clubs, libraries and cinema halls are not many in the town. But due to lack of infrastructural facilities, libraries and clubs services with the help of member subscription. Cinema halls and other cultural facilities are very limited compared with the high demand from not only the town dwellers but also from neighbouring inhabitants.

CONCLUSION

Though the rivers are helpful for the city as well as the dwellers of it, some-times they create various physical problems for the city's development. The town under study has such type of problem and in some places of the town it creates acute traffic problem as well as delays the development. The low concentration and high pressure of population, problems like slums low standard of living and insufficient urban amenities have come to surface as inevitable reasons for low level of development. As a result, the people from its surrounding areas are reluctant to come to the town for services and stagnation in the development of the town.

From the analysis of the landuse it is evident that the town under study have had a hapazard and unbalanced development and need a sound planning for restructure, reconstruction and reorganisation of landuses. There is an immediate need to control and for regulation of the landuse pattern for avoiding future misuse of the land and providing of future course of action programmes for healthy urban life.

From the analysis of different socio-economic problems it can be concluded that English Bazar has inadequate socio-economic functions compared to population of the towns of other districts. Due to insufficient space and allocation of area for shopping centres, a number of problems like traffic Jam, environmental disorder, overcrowding etc. have been created. Lack of proper transport facilities have profound influence on other activities. They are also suffering from inadequency of major roads as well as from narrow and unmetalled roads and unplanned road network. The narrow bridges on the river Mahananda inside the town and large number of slow-moving vehicles as well as trucks and buses complicate the transport systole within the town. Moreover, due to heavy rainfall, low maintenance of the roads and lack of management of traffic accelerate the problem. Railway Gate-5 in the town creates traffic jam for long hours on the major road very frequently.

Lack of proper water supply in the town use of well water are highly detrimental to the health of dwellers of the town. The town has surface drainage and sewerage systems and poor conservancy system which creates unhygienic conditions for the town dwellers. Lock of electricity on the streets has been a great concern of public safety, undesirable activities, accidents, anti-social activities or crimes in the town.

Environmental problem needs special attention and from the study it can be noted that living condition of majority of the town dwellers are far below the

normal standard. In the highly dense residential area and slums, shortage of drinking water, latrine, open space, proper roads and poor socio-economic amenities are the major characteristics of low level of development. High rate of immigration in the town creates various social and economic problems. A proper plan for the development of the town including their socio-economic functions and their proper distribution in the town are urgently needed. Before suggesting some plans review of earlier strategies and their implementation in the town is necessary.