

CHAPTER: V

Findings of the survey on perceptions and attitudes about Property taxes conducted on habitat, government officials and councilors.

5.1 Introduction

Urban local bodies are designed to bring rapid development within the jurisdiction of ULBs area with the participation of government officials, elected members and urban population, and the financial assistance made available by the state and the local resources raised through their own efforts. They have to mobilize both human and financial resources for progress in all directions .the major objects of the survey were (i) to ascertain the perceptions and awareness of the habitat about the concept of property tax and urban local body (ii) to know the views of elected members about the problem of property tax mobilization (iii) to study the possibilities of further mobilization of resources by means of local taxes and their contribution in the development effort.

5.2: Sample Design

The area of the survey was limited to Cooch Behar municipality .It covered 6 wards (30% of the total ward), 17 government officials and 6 elected leaders. It was carried out with the help of separate questionnaires for government officials, elected leaders and households.

Selection of Households: The distribution of households selected for survey by Cooch Behar Municipality is given in table 5.1.The universe of the survey consisted of 5772 households, of which 1732 (30 %) were selected randomly.

Table-5.1 Distribution of households selected on sample ward

Item	w-1	w-3	w-11	w-16	w-18	w-20	total	percentage
Total households in the Municipality	930	667	1033	939	1210	993	5772	100
Household selected on sample	279	201	309	282	363	298	1732	30

Source: Field Survey, 2011

5.3: Selection of Government Officials

In the selection of government officials, attention was focused on two aspects: decision making and implementation. The officials selected for the survey are JDLB (joint director of local bodies),DDLB (deputy director of local bodies) of Jalpaiguri division, executive officer of Cooch Behar Municipality, Accounts and finance coordinator of Cooch Behar Municipality, municipal finance expert, municipal accounts and finance expert of Jalpaiguri division and Various departmental head of Cooch Behar municipality including Tax Daroga.

5.4: Selection of Elected Leaders

In the ULB chairman is the key person in the process of decision making. It is needless to say that they command the support of the majority of the elected leaders. Even government officials adjust their best with elected representatives, mainly to chairman. The total elected leaders interviewed were 6 and out of the 6, 3 from the ruling party and 3 from the opposition party.

Socio-economic backgrounds of the households, government officials and elected leaders

Before going to the analysis of the perceptions and attitudes of various groups, it is essential to understand their backgrounds because their views may greatly depend on their backgrounds too. Therefore, an attempt is made here to briefly discuss their backgrounds.

Age-groups of the respondents: The respondents are divided into three age-groups: up to 40, 40-55 and above 55 years. An analysis of table 5.2 would reveal that majority of the heads of households were in the age –group of 40 to 55 years. With regard to the elected leaders, about 66.67 percent of them were the age –group of below 40 years. Above the age-group of 55, there were no elected leaders. This would highlight that higher age-groups were not favored in urban local body elections. With regards to government officials, 29.41 percent of them were from the age-group of below 40 years. About 38.05 percent of the heads of households belonged to the age-group of above 55 years. This is illustrated in table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Distribution of heads of households, government officials and elected leaders based on age-groups

age - group	households	percentage to total households	government officials	percentage to total government officials	elected leaders	percentage to total elected leaders
below 40	479	27.66	5	29.41	4	66.67
40-55	594	34.30	11	64.71	2	33.33
above 55	659	38.05	1	5.88		
Total	1732	100.00	17	100	6	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

5.5: Educational Status

Out of the 1732 households surveyed, 65.99 percent had secondary education. Levels of higher education percent were only 7.74. This indicates that consciousness about higher education within this municipal area is not satisfactory. All the government officials had under graduate and post graduate education qualifications as illustrated in table 5.3 .it can be seen that all the elected leaders possessed basic level of education and above, as shown in the table 5.3.even among the elected leaders, there were 1 masters degree holder and 1 law degree holder. This would highlight that only those who had at least basic education were preferred as leaders in urban local body.

Table-5.3 Distribution of households ,government officials and elected leaders by educational status

Categories	Households	Percentage on total households	Government officials	percentage to total government officials	electe d leader	percentag e to total elected leaders
MP	1143	65.99			4	66.67
HS	57	3.29				
BA/B.COM	308	17.78	11	64.71	1	16.67
M.SC/M.A/M.COM	134	7.74	6	35.29	1	16.67
others	90	5.20				
	1732	100	17	100	6	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

5.6: Primary Occupation & Income

Occupation

As regards occupational pattern, only households and elected leaders are being referred here. While analyzing the data, it would show that 37.47 percent of the households were in government service, whereas 9.99 percent were shop karmochari. Only 15.65 percent had been in profession like lawyer, doctors and related professions. Out of 6 elected leaders we find one is lawyer and other is part time lecturer of a college and rest engaged in petty business.

Table-5.4: Occupational distribution of heads of households and elected leaders

Occupational pattern	Households	Percentage to total households	Elected leaders	Percentage to total elected leaders
Shop karmochari	173	9.99		
In government service	649	37.47		
Business including petty trades	639	36.89	4	66.67
Others	271	15.65	2	33.33
Total	1732	100	6	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Income

For the purpose of income analysis the households, government officials and elected leaders are divided into five income groups. It can be seen from table 5.5 that all the government officials' income is more than 40000.00 annually. The bulk of the households (35.05 percent) had a annual income within Rs.20000 .00 to Rs.30000.00 annually where 4 elected leaders were in the income group of Rs. Rs. 30000.00 to Rs.40000.00 and 2 elected leaders were in the income group of above Rs. 40000.00.3 percent households, 100 percent government officials and 33.33 percent elected leaders had had monthly income above Rs. 40000.00. Government officials and elected leaders had higher levels of income than those of the households.

Table-5.5: Distribution of sample according to annual income for families

Income Class (in Rs.)	Households	Percentage to total households	Government officials	percentage to total government officials	elected leaders	percentage to total elected leaders
0-10000.00	281	16.22				
10,000.00-20,000.00	462	26.67				
20,000.00-30,000.00	607	35.05				
30,000.00-40,000.00	195	11.26			4	66.67
Above 40,000.00	52	3.00	17	100	2	33.33
No response	135	7.79				
Total	1732	100.00	17	100	6	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

5.7: Peoples Views on Property Tax

The aspect was related to their perceptions on their participation in local bodies. Two types of answers were received when the relevant question was put to them. They can be seen in table 5.6 .A look at the table would show that 85.00 percent of the people expressing their views that present property tax burden is more .This view was mostly correlated to families with low monthly income .Whereas 11.00 percent viewed that present amount of taxes is less it should be reviewed. When they were further asked to explain their view, they pointed out four reasons for their statement. They were

- (I) their economic condition is not sound
- (II) corruption ,they reacted, was rampant among this body

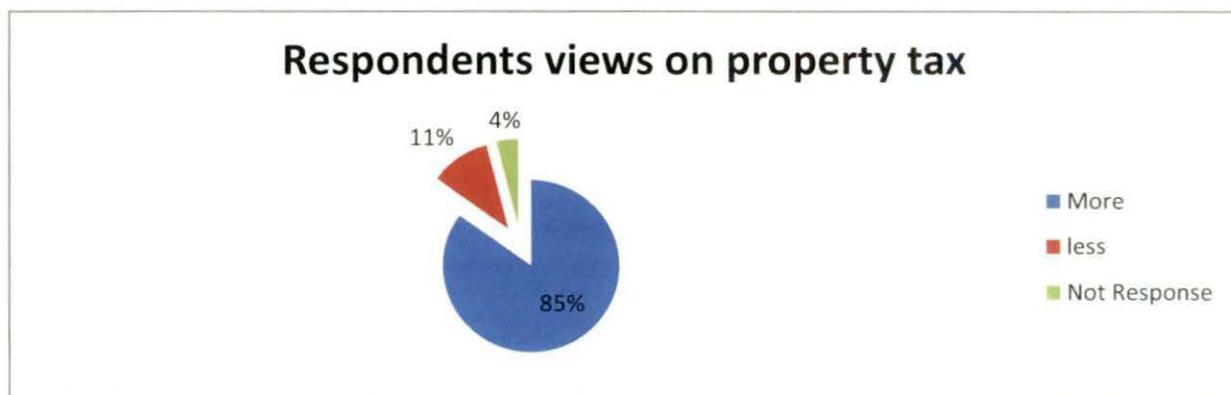
- (III) this body were not efficient in discharging the functions
- (IV) they even said ,ULB is useful only for the elected leaders. A further look on their perceptions, in the light of their educational back grounds, would reveal that over 90 percent of the MP passed perceived their participation as payment of taxes only. Holding tax was known to most of them as a municipal tax. They reacted over some of the evils of the system which already mentioned above.

Table-5.6: Distribution of respondents based on their views on property tax

Respondent view	W-1	W-3	W-11	W-16	W-18	W-20	Total	Percentage
More	243	162	288	246	303	231	1473	85.00
less	27	33	12	24	39	48	183	11.00
Not Response	9	6	9	12	21	19	76	4.00
	279	201	309	282	363	298	1732	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Fig-5.1



Source: Field Survey, 2011 of table -5.6

5.8: Knowledge and Willingness

Most of the people have knowledge about property taxes .Their percentage is 85.68. They just express that one type of tax is collected by municipality but they do not know about its implications. So awareness about property taxes and its implication to the people is required to be explained by the municipal authority to mobilize more taxes .Just about 54.33 percent told that in the last financial year i.e 2009-2010 they paid taxes .so it is clear that rest 39.26 percent holding tax is uncollected. Thus development activities are affected. 50.35 percent respondent told that they have paid tax yearly and others are not paid taxes regularly. It needs campaigning among people to provide taxes regularly.

Table-5.7: Distribution of respondents as they perceived their participation in ULBs development work by paying tax yearly

Total/Percentage	Total no. of respondent				Percentage of Respondent		
	yes	No	No Response	Total	yes	No	No Response
Do you have knowledge about the property tax of the Municipality	1484	219	27	1732	85.68	12.64	1.56
Have you paid the property tax last financial year(2009-2010)	941	680	111	1732	54.33	39.26	6.41
Have you paid tax yearly	872	752	108	1732	50.35	43.42	6.24

Source: Field Survey, 2011

5.9: Views of the Councilors and Their Suggestions

Views

Views of the leaders about poor collection of property tax are:-

- (I) No awareness about property tax of the habitat.
- (II) Tax payers give more interest on Personal savings than common interest.

(III) Economical imbalance among the tax payers also a factor.

(IV) Most of the cases the solvent tax payers take advantage from chairman to relief from tax payment or less payment.

(V) Propensity to tax evasion : A large no. of tax payer do not pay taxes year after year and comes after 5-6 years to take undue advantage by requesting chairman to reduce taxes.

(VI) Political interest.

(VII) Every political party is involved for giving undue privilege to the tax payers.

(VIII) Municipality has no positive steps to collect arrear property taxes.

(IX) Central valuation board comes for value the property and makes valuation, then chairman reduces the tax but government have not made any cross checking in this matter.

(X) Tax collector does not perform their duty properly.

(XI) People are interested to pay taxes but due to negligence of tax collector tax collection becomes minimal.

(xii) Arrear tax (property) from central and state property is amounted to Rs. 30000000.00 .Municipality issues notice but no response from the end.

Suggestions

(i). E-governance system to be established in that municipality and coordination among the all department to be developed.

(ii) Collection of tax may be accelerating by giving a reasonable rebate to the different tax payers.

(iii). Work culture is to be developed among the stuffs of this ULB.

(iv). Valuation should be conducted with regular intervals i.e. in every five years.

Peoples views about the Councilors

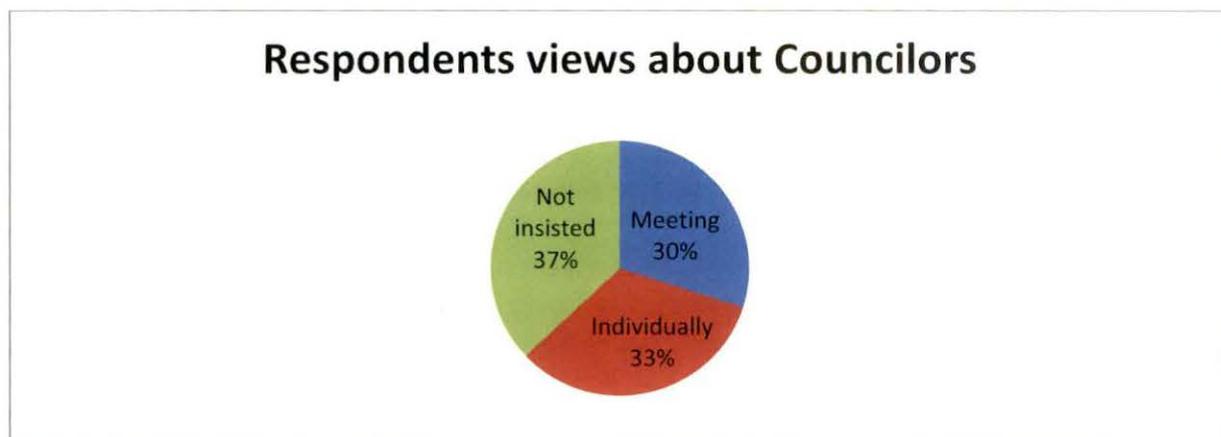
When asked to the respondent about the payment of taxes in timely commissioners insisted them. 37.00 percent expresses that commissioners did not insist about to pay taxes in regular way. Where 30.00 percent told that through meeting commissioners insisted and 37.00 percent told that commissioners insisted individually. Out of the three answers it was found commissioner did not insist to pay taxes. So it is found from the survey that commissioners are not performing their duty perfectly and them also responsible for poor revenue generation.

Table-5.8: Distribution of respondents based on their views about councilors activities

Response category	w-1	w-3	w-11	w-16	w-18	w-20	Total	Percentage
meeting	42	57	84	93	132	107	515	30.00
individually	147	66	123	102	69	72	579	33.00
not insisted	90	78	102	87	162	119	638	37.00
Total	279	201	309	282	363	298	1732	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Fig-5.2



Source: Field Survey, 2011 of table-5.8

Taxation and Finance

Several questions were put to the respondents with a view to ascertain their views regarding the satisfactory level, collection effectiveness and new idea about taxes. The different views are presented in Table 5.9. Of the total respondents, 79.79 percent found the satisfactory

level low. This view was mostly correlated to councilors who expresses that the tax collectors are not performing their duties properly. Similar to level of satisfactory almost same percentage i.e. 78.98 percent were also made response that they do not find any effectiveness in collection. It is revealed from the table 5.9 that 83.95 percent habitat does not give any new idea about taxes.

Table-5.9: Distribution of respondents about satisfaction, effectiveness and new idea of taxes

Major head	Respondent view	w-1	w-3	w-11	w-16	w-18	w-20	Total	Percentage
Level of satisfactory	yes	33	21	27	36	39	29	185	10.68
	no	225	135	243	231	306	242	1382	79.79
	Not Response	21	45	39	15	18	27	165	9.53
		279	201	309	282	363	298	1732	100.00
Collection effectiveness	yes	33	24	27	36	54	49	223	12.88
	no	213	147	261	231	294	222	1368	78.98
	Not Response	33	30	21	15	15	27	141	8.14
		279	201	309	282	363	298	1732	100.00
New idea about Taxes	yes	24	12	12	24	39	7	118	6.81
	no	252	183	234	237	276	272	1454	83.95
	Not Response	3	6	63	21	48	19	160	9.24
Total		279	201	309	282	363	298	1732	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2011

5.10: Findings of the Survey

The findings embodied in this chapter are the product of the data obtained through interviews with the households, government officials and elected leaders. While presenting the opinions aired by various groups about the functioning of ULBs, great care has been taken to translate their own perceptions in a systematic manner. Also, while reading the findings, one must note that the experience of the people or otherwise need not necessarily be a true picture of

the state of affairs. Hence, the findings must be considered as a reflection of realities, as perceived by the different groups, nevertheless, their opinions take us nearer to the truth. The findings of the survey are analyzed under several heads: Educational Status, Income Analysis, Peoples views on property tax, Taxation and Finance, Knowledge and Willingness and Views of the Councilors. An attempt is made to present the opinions on important items in tabular forms. Also, attention is focused to analyze the perceptions on important items in the light of their backgrounds.

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