SOCIO–DEMOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS OF SLUM DWELLERS IN AMRITSAR CITY: A CASE STUDY OF HINDUSTANI BASTI

Abstract

A slum is a compact area that characterised by over population, poorly build congested dwelling conditions, unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lack of proper sanitary and drinking water facilities. Thus, the slum dwellers live under the most deplorable conditions with little access to effective social and health care services, water and sanitation facilities and they are more vulnerable to epidemics. Over 65 million people of the country are living in the slums and constitute about 17.40 per cent share of the total urban population (Census of India, 2011). The present study has conducted in a slum locality of Amritsar city of Punjab, India. The slum started developing in the city during the time of partition of the country when refugees from Pakistan illegally occupied land outside the walled city. Hindustani Basti is one of such slum localities that is located near the Lohgarh Gate of the walled city. The primary objective of this study is to acquire knowledge about the socio-demographic and economic status of the slum dwellers. Data has been collected in respect of age structure, income level, sex composition, migration, housing conditions, religion and family structure. Overall, the socio-economic status of the slum dwellers is quite low.

Keywords: Slum, Sex Composition, Family Structure, Migration, Age Structure

Introduction

Today, over half of the world's population lives in urban areas and by the middle of this century, 7 out of 10 people are living in urban areas. This increased urbanisation has also lead to more and more people residing in informal settlements generally known as slums (Roy, et.al. 2014). In India, for instance, about 13.70 million households or 17.34 per cent of urban Indian households are living in the slums. Over a third of India's slum population lives in 46 million-plus cities (Census of India, 2011).

Slums have become an integral part of every city. Physical characteristics in most of these slums are almost the same. They are usually, "a cluster of hutments with dilapidated and frail structures having common or no toilet facilities, suffering from lack of basic amenities, inadequate arrangement for drainage as well as for the disposal of solid wastes and garbage" (Agrawal, 2014). The number of slum dwellers in Amritsar city has increased from 32,632 in 1981 to 3, 32, 274 recording more than ten times increase in its slum population during the last 3 decades. It constituted 29.33 per cent of the total population as per Census of India, 2011. However, information regarding the slums of the city is neither up to date nor is reliable (Sandhu and Teotia, 2013& Sandhu and Sekhon, 2017). Kumar 2017 believed that there are definitely more slums in the city than quoted by Amritsar Municipal Corporation. Regarding the slums of the city, Sandhu (1985 and 1987) opined that slum dwellers of Amritsar city are different from the slum dwellers of other metropolitan cities as most of slum dwellers were migrated to the city due to a historical event rather than economic compulsion. They are living in better houses in terms of type, condition, covered area, number of rooms and facilities within the houses and locality". Sandhu (1987) made a comparative study of the slums of NCT Delhi and Amritsar and observed that the slum dwellers of both the cities are quite similar in terms of social class, significantly different in terms of various aspects of their housing environment. Slum residents in Amritsar tended to live in better housing environment with greater number of basic amenities in comparison to the slum dwellers of NCT Delhi. The results suggest that housing policies should concentrate differently on mega, metropolitan and relatively small cities and rural areas. Kaur (2001) also presented a positive picture of the slums of Punjab state by analysing the demographic and economic characteristics of the slum and non-slum dwellers. Sex ratio among the slum dwellers was more than non-slum dwellers. She had the view that upliftment of the slum dwellers can lead to the overall development of urban society. Kaur and Kaur (2015) in their study of city slums revealed the similar results and found that living conditions of slum dwellers was satisfied as the slum abadies have the access to regular water supply, electricity, sewerage connections and streets are cemented one. The slum households in these abadies resemble any lower middle-class household in non-slum locality of the city. Sharma et.al. (2015) in their primary investigation of 4 slums (Verka near Majitha Bypass, Mohkumpura, Bangla Basti and Ekta Nagar) of Amritsar city found that majority of the migrants (91.80 per cent) were migrants from the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal and of Hindu religion. About 95.40 per cent of slum dwellers belonged to scheduled caste but belonged to upper lower class according to modified Kuppuswamy scale of socio-economic status. However a high percentage of dwellers were 74.20 were illiterate and were having high ferlity rate (>four children). However, some other studies presented a different picture of city slums. Punjab Urban Planning & Development Authority (2010) found that the housing conditions of the slum areas are very poor in the city. On an average, one-room tenements consists 6-7 people and are made up of semi permanent materials due to the cost factor. Slum dwellers do not have fixed income and mainly work on daily wages. Sharma et.al. (2017) carried out a slum survey on the socio–economic and demographic conditions of slum dwellers by selecting 4 slum localities of the city such as Verka (Majitha Bypass), Mohkumpura, Bangla Basti and Ekta Nagar, covering total population of 37,670. They found that 91.40 per cent slum dwellers were migrants and belonged to Hindu religion. Literacy level of slum dwellers was only 25 per cent. Due

to high illiteracy, majority of them (82.20 per cent) were unemployed and living in unhygienic environmental conditions. Similarly, Kaur and Kaur (2013) found that the slums of the city are over congested, without proper sanitation facilities and slum households were made up of temporary or semi-permanent material. Due to lower levels of literacy, slum dwellers of these localities are engaged in the informal and unskilled occupations such as sweepers, domestic servants, rickshaw puller, garbage lifters, etc. Sandhu and Teotia (2013) also indicated that two-fifth resident of the slums belongs to the category of scheduled castes and are cultivators, agricultural works and household industry workers than the city population. This is due to the fact majority of slums are situated on the periphery of the city and many of them have been residents of villages which had been included in the city limits. Kumar (2017) opined that Municipal Corporation Amritsar has failed for providing housing facilities and other basic infrastructural facilities to its slum dwellers. It is observed that 18.13 per cent slums of the city are devoid of water supply facility, 31.25 per cent are without sewerage facility and 76 per cent are without electricity. In the absence of regular electric connections, majority of population tap the electricity illegally through kundi connections. Moreover, in many of the slums areas such as Bangla Basti, Indira Colony, the high-tension lines and towers are exist in between the settlements having road underneath and houses by its side that is a threat to human habitation. Bajwa (2014) believed that about 89 per cent of the slums in the city exist on the private land where in some cases the land either has been encroached or purchased from landowner and the remaining 11 per cent of the slums exists on the MCA lands that are mainly located on the southern part of the city. Gill (2015) studied the morbidity pattern and health seeking behavior of women in reproductive age in the slums of Amritsar city and found that majority of the slum women were migrants, illiterate, belonged to lower caste and more than half of them were suffering from one or more health problems. The present research paper attempts to examine the socio-economic and demographic profile of slum dwellers of Amritsar city. The study is primary data based. Data has primarily collected through questionnaire/schedule and personal interview methods by selecting 100 households randomly. The study also aims at knowing the problems that slum dwellers face in their daily lives. Some recommendations are also suggested to improve the living conditions and status of the slum dwellers.

Study Area

The fourth Sikh Guru Ram Das Ji, founded the city of Amritsar or "Pool of Nectar" in 1577 AD. It is also known as The Golden City or Guru Ki Nagari. With an average elevation of 234 meters above the mean sea level, it is located at 31 63' N latitude and 74 87' E longitudes. The total area of Amritsar metropolis is 170 square kilometers. The total population of Amritsar is 11, 32,761 according to the Census of India, 2011 which makes it the second most populous city of Punjab after Ludhiana. In 1975, the Municipal Corporation of Amritsar (MCA) identified 64 slums on the bases of Punjab slum areas (Improvement and Clearance Act 1961). The town and country department of Punjab carried out a survey in 1976 and they identified 19 areas of slums, located within thy walled city as well as well as on the periphery. Apart from the notified slums, there are around 20 villages on outer fringe of MCA which exhibit slum like characteristics. The notified slums in Amritsar cover an area of 5.8 square kilometers that constitutes 4.26 per cent area of Amritsar. The old slums in Amritsar are located just outside the walled city whereas the comparatively new and recent slums are found at the fringe of the city especially near industrial establishments or where the land is of low cost (Punjab Urban Planning and Development Authority, 2010).

The study has conducted in the Abadi/slum of Hindustani Basti, located near the Lohgarh Gate outside the walled city. With the total population of around 2500, the slum covers a total area of 7950 square yard (1.64 acre). The slum is located on the land of Municipal Corporation. The slum started developing here during the time of partition of India when refugees from Pakistan illegally occupied this land and developed their shelters. The conditions of most of the houses are not up to the mark in the study area. Basic facilities like streetlights and sewage are not properly functioning. However, the narrow lanes of the slum are cemented ones (Punjab Urban Planning and Development Authority, 2010).

Distribution of Slums in Amritsar city

Map 1 portrays the spatial distribution of slums, majority of slums are located within the walled city and in the southern part of city in close vicinity of the walled city, Amritsar (Kumar, 2017). Concentration of slums on the southern part was largely because of haphazard and unplanned development in the area besides absence of any major development scheme taken up by the Improvement Trust and Municipal Corporation of Amritsar (Teotia and Kumar, 2015). Amritsar city can be divided in two broad areas i.e. city on the southern side of main railway line and Grand Trunk Road (GTR) and city on northern side of main railway line or GTR. The former part of the city mainly consists of walled city and its surrounding areas and latter part of the city mainly consists of areas which were developed before 1947 and after 1947 (Kumar, 2017). There are 63 slum Abadis/localities in the city (http://amritsarcorp.com/slump.htm). It is estimated that the total population of slums is about 360,000, which is about 36% of the population of the city. On an average, each slum has a population of around 5,600 and population density of about 876 persons /ha. (Risbud et.al, 2012). The size of the slums in Amritsar varies from 300 persons to 57600 persons.

Map 1
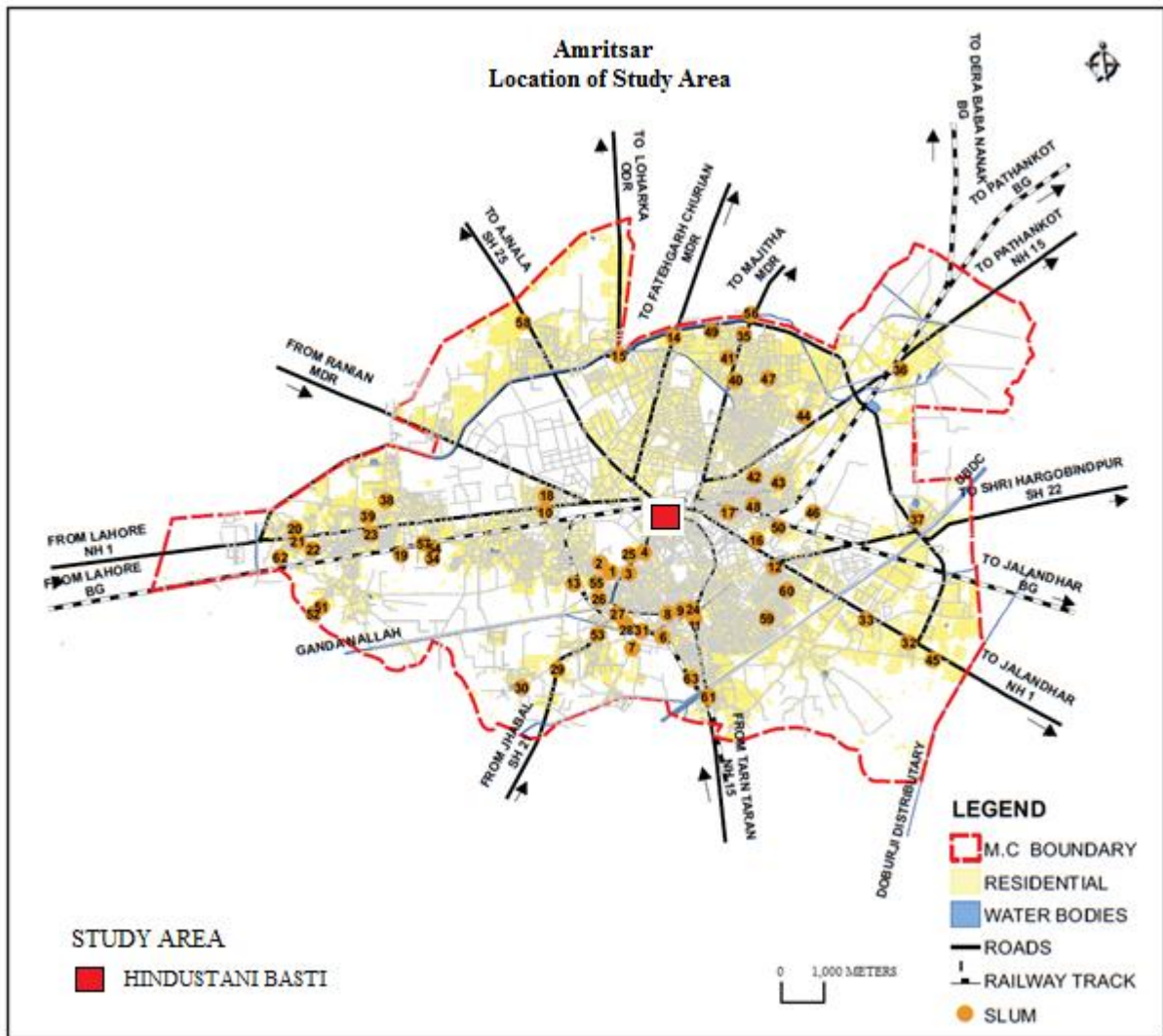
Source: Punjab Urban Planning and Development Authority, 2010

Discussion

Age and Sex Composition

Age composition refers to the number of persons in a particular age group. The age structure constitutes an important aspect of demographic analysis and development planning. Sex composition means total number of males and female in a population (Chandna, 2011). Changes in sex composition largely reflect the underlying socio-economic and cultural patterns of a society in different ways (Riyaza, 2000).

Sex ratio describes the number of females per thousand males in a population (Census of India, 2011). The balance between the two sexes affects the social and economic relationship within a community as the two sexes play partly contrasting and partly complementary roles in the economy and society (Chandna, 2009). Total number of females in the selected slum was 242 while the total male population is 272. Males constitute 52.90 per cent while females constitute 47.10 per cent of the total population of the area. The sex ratio of this area was 890 females per thousand males. It further shows that 157 persons were falling in the age group of below 15 years while only 3 persons were above 80 years. The highest numbers of persons were found in the age group 15 to 60 i.e. 324 and contribute 63 per cent of the total population.

Migratory Status

Migration like age and sex composition is another demographic aspect that helps in better understanding and analysis of present demographic conditions of any area. Migration makes a threefold impact on an area, through in-migration, out migration, and characteristics of migrants (Chandna, 2011). Out of total population, 13 per cent were migrants. Of the total migrants, 31 per cent are females and 69 per cent were males. Among the various reasons of migration, it is found that all the females have migrated because of marriage and all the males migrated due to the economic causes such as for better employment

opportunities. Furthermore, 6 per cent of the respondents were living in the slum for less than five years. The period of stay for 10 per cent of respondents was between 6 to 10 years while it was 14 per cent each for the groups of 11 to 20 years and 21 to 30 years. It is observed that 56 per cent of the total respondents were living along with their families for more than 30 years.

Social Status

The social status of the respondents is revealed through the caste and religious composition, marital status and family structure. Social structure makes a considerable impact on the demographic and economic conditions of the area. Caste has been pivotal pillar for understanding the organisational structure of the society. In order to give protection to untouchables against being discriminated exploited or degraded the Indian constitutions safeguard their interests having termed them as Scheduled Castes (Bajwa, 2014). The popular notion that the schedule caste population dominates in the slum is well applied in case of present study area. Out of 100 families, 95 per cent of them belonged to the schedule caste while only 5 per cent belonged to the OBC category. There is no single family belonging to the general category.

The marital status of the respondents of an area is also an important indicator of social conditions of those respondents. Out of the total respondents, 78 per cent were married, 14 per cent were unmarried and 7 per cent were widows. One case of separation was also reported.

Family structure refers to the main size of family as how many members are there in a family. The study of family structure is important as it reveals the socio- economic level of the population (Bhagat and Roy, 2013). Majority of the slum families (90 per cent) are nuclear in nature. While only 10 per cent of the respondents reported to have joint families. Religion is also an important indicator of social structure of a population. Religion has a significant impact on the literacy level, level of income, status of women and fertility rate of the population. The table 3 shows that majority of slum dwellers (93) in the present case were Hindus followed by the Muslims (3 per cent), Sikhs (4 per cent) and Christians (1 per cent).

Educational Status

Educational status reflects their association with their incomes, occupations pursued and life decisions pertaining to healthy living and concern for their well-being. Education status is an important indicator on which perception of household is based (Bajwa, 2014). Educational status of respondents is another important indicator that depicts the social and economic status of a population and influences the various attributes of population like fertility, mortality, mobility, family structure, occupation structure etc. Level of education of the people living in this slum is quite low. Out of total 513 respondents, 363 were literates while 150 persons were illiterate. The literacy rate of the slum is recorded as 70.7 per cent. Out of the total literates, 24.20 per cent were never go to school. Moreover, majority of the slum dwellers (117) have studied up to primary level only. Only Six persons are graduates and 4 persons have done diplomas in various vocational courses.

Housing Structure

Urban slums are the areas where the housing conditions are poor and dilapidated. However, in the present case, the houses were not in dilapidated conditions, most of them were made of packka material. But the houses were of one room only (Table 5). Out of total households, 73 per cent of the slum dwellers lived in packka houses while only 4 per cent were living in kutcha houses and 23 per cent of the slum dwellers were living in the semi-pakka houses. Majority of the houses (63 per cent) has been marked with only one living room while 30 per cent were having two rooms and 7 per cent slum houses were consisted three rooms. Regarding the floor of the slum houses, it was found that 61 per cent of the total houses had cemented flooring while 33 per cent had marble flooring. Only 6 per cent of the houses had ordinary brick flooring. About the roof of the slum houses, it was found that 68 per cent of the houses have cement roof while only 18 per cent houses had the roof made from wood. One house was found with roof made out of plastic sheets. More than 82 per cent of the houses did not have enclosed separate kitchen. Majority of the slum houses possessed one room only and that room was also used for cooking, sleeping, studying and all other activities including bathing in some cases. Only 18 per cent of the houses had a separate kitchen.

Availability of Basic Amenities

Slums of the country lack basic infrastructural facilities and amenities such as drinking water & sanitation and other assets. However, in the present case, 90 per cent of the slum dwellers had Television in their homes, a relatively larger percentage (97 per cent) of them had of mobile phones and 4 per cent of the households have radio sets. The percentage of households having refrigerator, sewing machine and washing machine was 82 per cent, 18 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. About 17 per cent of households were also reading newspapers. Moreover, every nine out of ten houses have an electricity connection.

Sanitation, Waste Disposal and Water Facility

The sanitation and garbage disposal facilities in this slum are relatively good contrary to the general outlook of slums. About 63 per cent of the families had toilet facilities in their houses, while rest of them (37 per cent) of the slum dwellers either defecated in open or used shared toilets with other households. Municipal Corporation of the city supply drinking water to these slum

households. That is why the 96 per cent respondents got water from Government taps for all purposes. Only 3 per cent used Submersible pumps followed by only 1 house using hand pump as the source of water. However, the water supply is quite irregular and breaking up of pipes and their leakage is a common problem. The slum has a proper provision for waste disposal. The municipal corporation workers have collected garbage from the majority of the slum households (81 per cent) while 16 per cent of the households throw their garbage in open and 3 per cent of the respondents admitted that they didn't throw garbage on any specific place. However, slum residents complained that the *safai sewaks* do not lift garbage from their homes on regular bases and the garbage bin provided by them are very less in comparison to the households.

Economic Status

Under economic status, the occupational structure and income of the slum dwellers has been studied. The income level of the people largely determines their education and living standard. Out of total slum workers (188 persons), 73.4 per cent (138 persons) are males while 26.6 per cent (50 persons) are females. The larger number of slum dwellers were working as daily labourers (45 per cent) followed by self employed (20 per cent) and factory workers (10 persons). The persons who were self employed were mostly shopkeepers, tailors and some of them were engaged in *sehra* (garlands) making. Out of the total workers, 9 per cent also worked as domestic helps (all females) and 6 per cent of the total workers were rickshaw drivers. The remaining 10 per cent worked as teachers and as Government employees in various departments. Furthermore, table 8 reveals that the highest proportion (59 per cent) of slum families had monthly income between 4,000-10,000 rupees while 28 per cent were having monthly income between 10,001-20,000. Only 9 per cent of the slum families fall in the lowest income category of less than 4000 and the lowest proportion (4 per cent) of them had earned monthly income above rupees 20,000.

Furthermore, 41 per cent of the workers have to travel for more than 4 kilometers to go to their place of work and only 22 percent of the workers found work within one km distance from their homes. The highest proportion of the slum workers (35 per cent) has been using auto-rikshaw to reach up to their work places and 21 per cent used bicycles, 15 per cent used motorcycles while 29 per cent of the workers used to go by foot or bus. Slum dwellers of the locality were facing many problems like non-availability of streetlights, lack of medical stores near the slum and irregular water and electricity supply, hanging electricity wires in the locality.

Major Findings and Conclusion

The present study has been conducted to know the socio-demographic and economic conditions of the slum locality named Hindustani Basti in Amritsar. The results of the field survey reveals that majority of the slum population belonged to Hindu religion and scheduled caste category. They were literate but their education level was low. The sex ratio of the present slum locality was also below the natural sex ratio. Furthermore, the Municipal Corporation has provided all the basic facilities in the slum locality such as drinking water, sewerage and electricity. Majority of the slum dwellers were having mobiles and televisions in their homes but their income level is very low as they were working as daily labourers. The slum dwellers were living in single room houses and did not have a separate kitchen and bathroom. However, their houses were made of concrete material. Thus, the socio-economic status of the slum dwellers was quite low. They were also low on demographic front. However, some of the dwellers were well-educated and living in good houses. There is a significant positive correlation was observed between the education levels of households and their housing structure. Moreover, the current scenario of the slum locality reveals that living conditions of slum dwellers are better than the perceived definition of slums given by the Census of India. Awareness about education and family planning seems to be growing. With the proper implementation of judiciously chosen measures and intervention of government officials, the overall living conditions of slums can be improved and they can make a significant contribution to the strategy of inclusive growth. The basic civic amenities like water supply and electricity should be adequate. Dwellers can also be motivated by awareness camps and by creating the self-help groups to uplift their standard of living.

Table 1
Hindustani Basti: Amritsar
Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Slum Dwellers

Sex Composition	Respondents (in numbers)
Males	271
Females	242
Total	513
Sex Ratio	893
Age Structure	
0-15	157
15-20	31
20-40	194
40-60	99
60-80	29

Above 80	3
Total	513
Migratory Status of Slum Dwellers	**Respondents (in percentage)**
Migrants	13
Non Migrants	87
Sex of Migrants	
Males	69
Females	31
Cause of Migration	
Marriage	31
Employment	69
Period of Stay in Slum (In Years)	
Less Than 5	6
6-10	10
11-20	14
21-30	14
31 and Above	56
Caste Composition	
Scheduled Caste	95
OBC	5
Marital Status	
Married	78
Unmarried	14
Widow	7
Separated	1
Family Structure	
Nuclear	90
Joint	10
Religious Composition	
Hindu	92
Muslim	3
Sikh	4
Christian	1
Level of Education (above 7 years)	**Respondents (in numbers)**
No Schooling	88
Primary	117
middle	108
10+2	40
Graduate	6
Diploma	4
Total	363
Type of House	**Respondents (in percentage)**
Packka	73
Kutcha	4
Semi Pakka	23
Number of Rooms	
One	63
Two	30
Three	7
Type of Flooring	
Cement	61
Marble	33
Other	6
Type of Roof	
Cement	81
Wood	18
Other	1
Availability of Kitchen	
Separate Kitchen	18

No Separate Kitchen	82
Assets	
Television	90
Mobile	97
Radio	4
Newspaper	17
Fan	96
Double Bed	74
Refrigerator	82
Sewing Machine	18
Washing Machine	40
Electricity	90
Toilet Facility	
Yes	63
No	37
Source of Water	
Government Tap	96
Submersible pumps	3
Hand Pump	1
Mode of Waste Disposal	
In Open	16
Collected From Home	81
No Specific Place	3
Workforce	**Respondents (in numbers)**
Males	138
Females	50
Total	188
Monthly Income (in rupees)	
Less Than 4000	9
4000-10000	59
10001-20000	28
20001-30000	4
Nature of Employment	
Daily Labourer	45
Factory Worker	10
Domestic Help	9
Rickshaw Driver	6
Self Employed	20
Other	10
Distance Travelled (In Kms.)	**Respondents (in percentage)**
<1	22
1-2	14
2-4	23
> 4	41
Total	100
Mode of Transportation	
Cycle	21
Activa scooter	4
Motor Bike	11
Auto-Rikshaw	35
Other	29

Source: Field Study, 2018

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