

A Comparative Analysis of Housing Conditions in West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and Midnapore Town Based on 2011 Census Data

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Abstract: Urban housing conditions, amenities and assets are very precious items for human being as well as for our society, because people always want to get better opportunities for their livelihood. Broadly speaking, human beings always want to spend their leisure time in different socio-cultural activities like, cinema, theatre, shopping, travelling, taking foods from restaurant etc. But basic amenities, infrastructure and requirements are those things which are necessary for any one's daily life. On this regard, as Midnapore is a town and it is governed by municipal authority, peoples of different wards are getting so many facilities (viz. amenities, assets, infrastructure etc.) from Municipality. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to a comparative study of the availability and intensity of different housing conditions in West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and Midnapore Town in 2011 census. The study is mainly based on secondary sources of data collected from various publications of Census of India for the latest Census year. The study reveals that Midnapore Town has the better housing conditions as compared to state level and district level.

Key Words: Housing conditions, Urban, Urbanization.

1. INTRODUCTION:

It is evident that house is considered to be the most valuable economic asset and is a significant determinant of lifestyle and socio-economic status of any society (Toppo, 2014). It is indicated that household assets and amenities reflect a household's quality of life of any region. It is therefore, an important goal of Indian Developmental Planning. Housing is one of the three basic needs of human life and an important indicator of social welfare. So the study is focusing on the lifestyles of each and every household and their consumption patterns. Housing and household amenities such as source of lighting, safe drinking water, housing condition, separate kitchen, toilet facility determines a household quality of life. Though it is also said that the housing is one of the three basic needs of human beings, but it is still beyond the access of the disadvantaged section of the society. Under the Goal Seven (7) of Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), targets on the usage of improved water source and sanitation facility. These goals have been targeted to be achieved by the year 2015.

Therefore, the study is an attempt to a comparative study of the availability and intensity of different housing conditions in West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and Midnapore Town in 2011 census.

2. OBJECTIVES:

The main objective of the study is a comparative analysis the availability and intensity of different housing conditions in West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and Midnapore Town.

3. DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY:

The study is mainly based on secondary sources of data collected from various publications of Census of India for the latest Census year viz. Primary Census Abstract, Census of West Bengal, 2011 (Electronic format), Houselisting & Housing Census, Census of West Bengal, 2011 (Electronic format) and Statistical Abstract, Paschim Medinipur District, West Bengal, 2011(Electronic format). For the analysis, simple cartographic techniques have been applied.

4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS:

It is evident that housing condition is an important determinant of human welfare both from the perspective of individuals as well as communities. It has an instrumental value in so far as it affects the physical and mental health of the residents and through that in their ability to function in both economic and social spheres of life. It is also a symbol of dignity that affects in many social and economic interactions. For these reasons, housing has been considered as a basic necessity. That makes it one of the foundational characteristics in measuring the economic and social development of a country or its constituent parts. (Kanan and Khan, 2016)

It is well known that accommodation or housing condition is very relevant parameter to assess the socio-cultural traits of human being. It represents different attributes of accommodation or housing condition which are closely associated with human culture and society.

4.1 Ownership Status of the House:

Census of India (2011) classifies ownership status of the house into three categories viz. owned, rented and any others. If a household is self-occupying the census house or owned by it and not making payments in the form of rent to anyone, then the household is considered as living in an owned house. On other extreme, a household was treated as living in rented house if rent is paid or contracted for by the household in cash or kind. It is also noted that accommodation provided to the employer like

Government quarters, etc. is also treated as rented house. Except these two categories remaining proportion treated as other houses. Information on ownership status of house is an essential part of good physical settlement planning for any country. Following table presents a comparative account of ownership status of the house in West Bengal as in Paschim Medinipur District and Midnapore Town for the latest census.

Table 4.1
Ownership Status of the House, West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and Midnapore Town, 2011

Ownership status	Percentage of Urban Households			Gap (in percentage)	
	West Bengal	Paschim Medinipur District	Midnapore Town	Between State and Town	Between District and Town
Owned	75.57	78.30	84.60	-9.03	-6.30
Rented	20.35	16.80	11.90	8.45	4.90
Any others	4.08	4.90	3.40	0.68	1.50

Source: House listing & Housing Census, West Bengal, 2011.

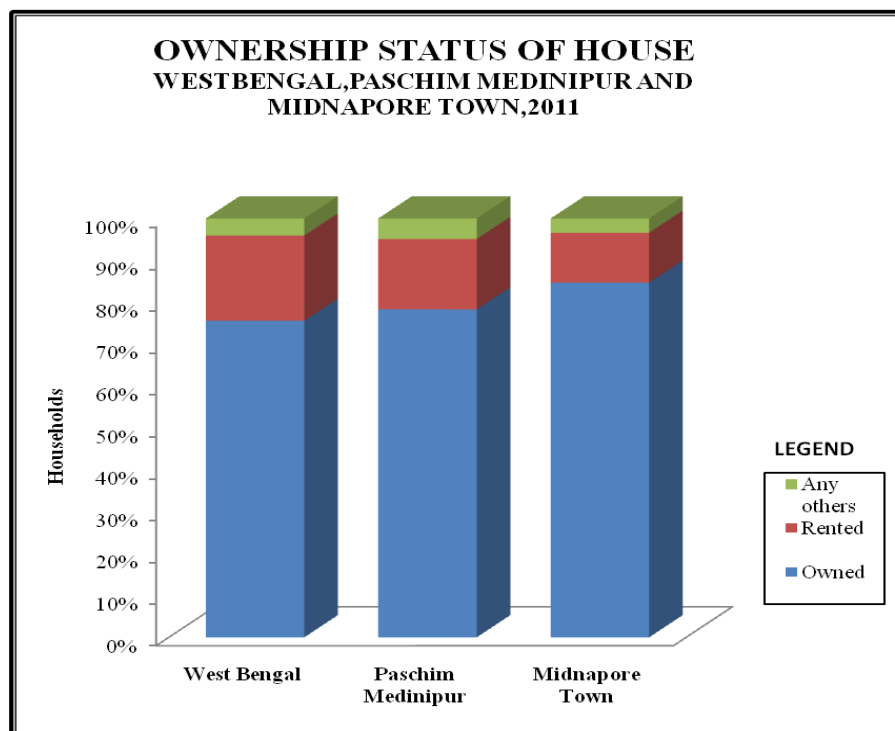


Figure 4.1

It is noted from the Table 4.1 that the percentage share of households living in owned house is maximum throughout state, district as well as in Midnapore town. It is revealed from the table that above two-third households of Midnapore Town having owned houses. Whereas, the share for the district is near about 80 percent and share for the state average, it is little more than 75 percent. But it is quite interesting to see that share for the rented house is quite low in Midnapore Town as compared to district and state's average. It also noted that the household ownership gap between state and town is higher than the district and town. It is also observed from the table that barely 4 percent households of Midnapore Municipality reside in other houses. The corresponding figure for the district and the state are also very low. It is needless to say that maximum people live in their own houses and those who go different places for their occupation, business and other activities mainly resides in rented or other houses.

4.2 Condition of Census House:

It is well known that home is the centre of most people's lives. For the majority of them their dwelling is the place where they spend most time and where they most need to feel comfortable, secured and well provided for. The dwelling not only provides shelter and a place to eat, sleep and store possessions. It is also the prime base for family and social activities and a forum of expression of personality and taste and for enjoyment of leisure activities. Once a house is purchased their dwelling is likely to be their most valuable economic asset and the kind of accommodation occupied by a household is an important indicator of its lifestyle and socio-economic status. Households which lack any of the basic amenities or have to live in decaying 'slums' are rightly seen as deprived and under stress and becoming homeless is regarded by most individuals and particular by families met with any natural disaster. Local and national governments are therefore concerned not only about housing provision, but also about the physical condition of the housing. Therefore, the major factors of a house are the age of the structure, the quality of the original building and the degree to which it has been maintained and repaired (Toppo, 2014). Table 4.2 analyse the comparative study of the house condition of west Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and Midnapore Town for the 2011 Census.

Table 4.2
Condition of Census House, West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and
Midnapore Town, 2011

Condition of Census House	Percentage of Urban Households			Gap (in percentage)	
	West Bengal	Paschim Medinipur District	Midnapore Town	Between State and Town	Between District and Town
Good	57.52	58.80	59.10	-1.58	-0.30
Livable	35.87	32.80	31.90	3.97	0.90
Dilapidated	6.60	8.30	9.00	-2.40	-0.70

Source: *Houselisting & Housing Census, West Bengal, 2011.*

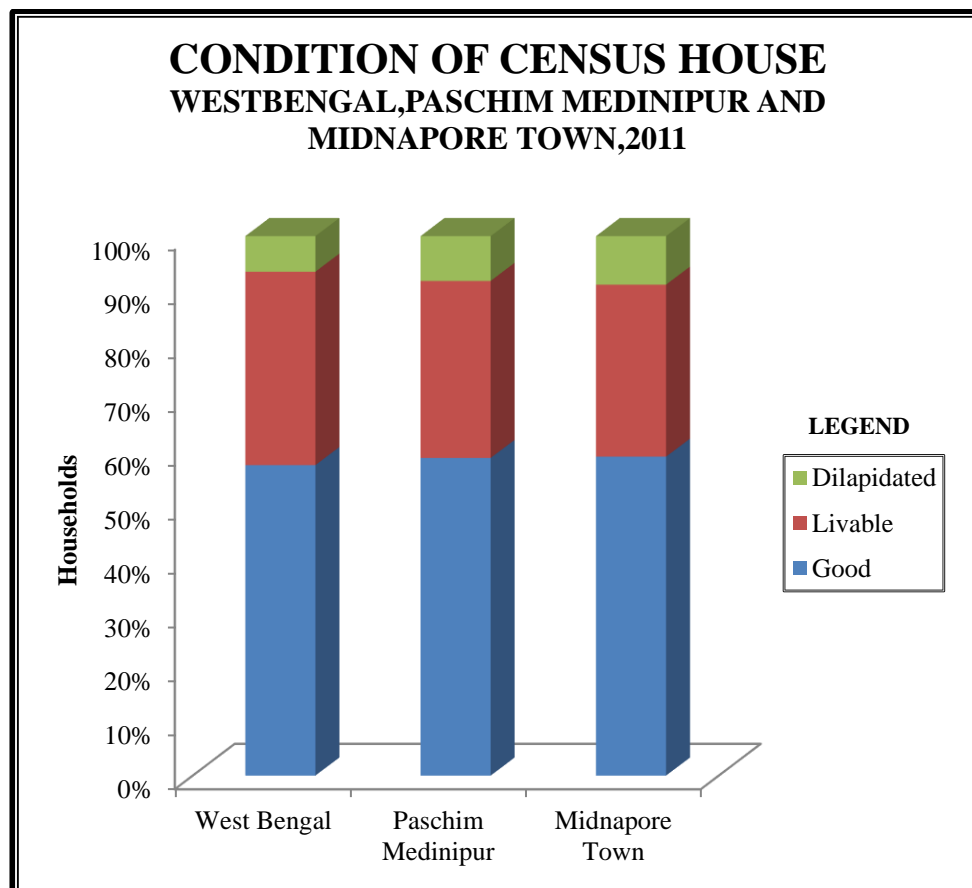


Figure 4.2

It is noted from the above table that the percentage share of households living in good condition of houses is maximum throughout state, district as well as in Midnapore town. Near about three-fifth households of Midnapore Town are residing in good condition of census house. In this town, the percentage of good condition of census house is little more in share as compare to Paschim Medinipur District and West Bengal as a whole. Rest are living in livable condition of houses across state, district and Midnapore Town. But it is noted that the proportion of livable condition of census house is less in share than the district and state's average. However, it is also remarkable to note that as much as less than one-tenth households are living in dilapidated condition of census house both in aforementioned regions. It is evident that in terms of condition of census houses the gap between district and town is relatively less in proportion than the gap between state and town. It is also notable that nearly one-tenth of economically weaker people now live in dilapidated house of the study area.

4.3 Dwelling Room Availability:

To find out how many rooms are available per household in the study area, all the households are divided into seven categories according to Census of India, 2011. Following table portrays a comparative account of dwelling room availability of households in West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and Midnapore Town for the year 2011.

Table 4.3
Dwelling Room Availability, West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and
Midnapore Town, 2011

Number of Dwelling Rooms	Percentage of Urban Households			Gap (in percentage)	
	West Bengal	Paschim Medinipur District	Midnapore Town	Between State and Town	Between District and Town
No exclusive room	2.97	1.40	0.80	2.17	0.60
One room	41.69	32.80	28.60	13.09	4.20
Two rooms	31.70	37.80	35.70	-4.00	2.10
Three rooms	13.52	14.20	17.40	-3.88	-3.20
Four rooms	6.12	8.70	9.70	-3.58	-1.00
Five rooms	1.74	2.10	3.20	-1.46	-1.10
Six rooms and above	2.26	3.00	4.60	-2.34	-1.60

Source: *Houselisting & Housing Census, West Bengal, 2011.*

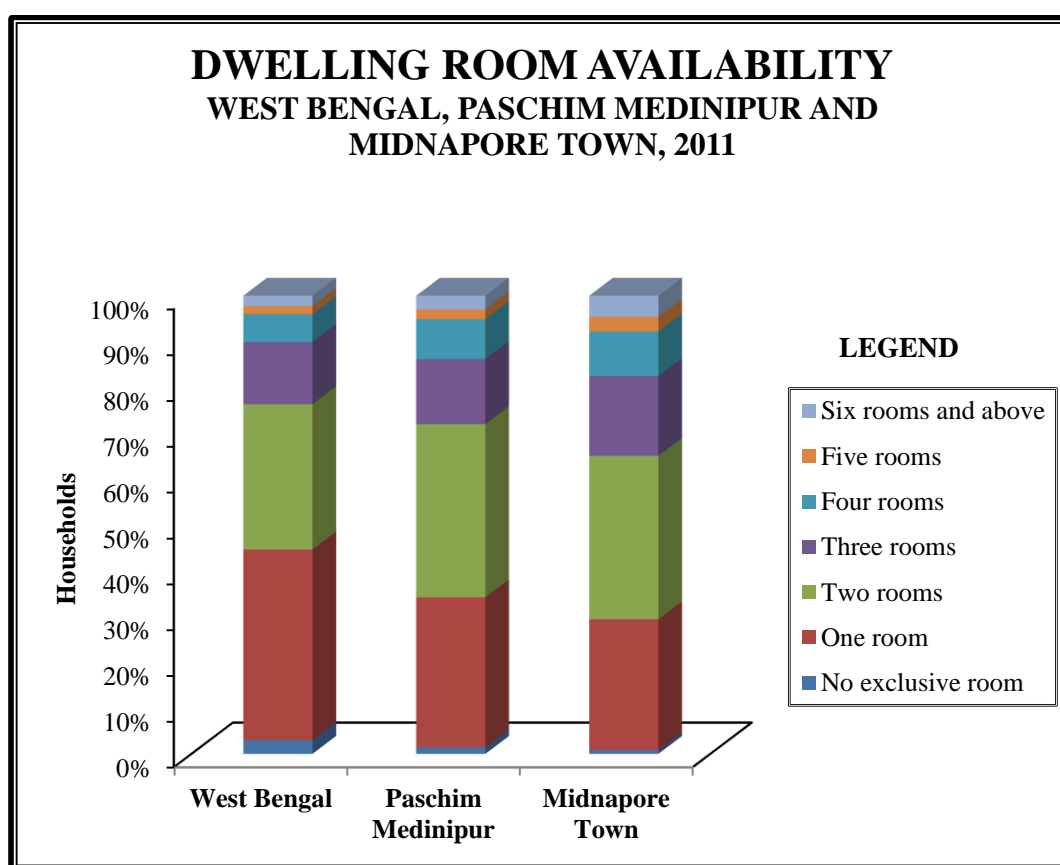


Figure 4.3

The variation in terms of availability of dwelling rooms across state, district and town are very least in amount. The table 4.3 shows that slightly more than one-third households of Midnapore Town live in two rooms facilitated houses followed by one room, three rooms, four rooms, six rooms and above categories. This trend is similar in Paschim Medinipur District also. The study reveals that most of poor people are living in one and two rooms facilitated houses across state, district as well as in Midnapore Town as a whole. In urban West Bengal, maximum people live in single room (near about 42 percent). The share for town with regards to single dwelling room is relatively less in proportion than the state's percentage. It is obvious that percentage gap of all types of dwelling room between district-town is relatively less in share than the state-town gap.

4.4 Materials of Floor:

Census of India, 2011 has categories seven predominant materials for floor of the house. Also it clarifies that in a house only the drawing room has a mosaic floor while all other rooms and corridors have cement floor, the material of floor is recorded as 'Cement' (predominant material). Material not falling under any of the first six specified categories (Mud, Wood/ Bamboo, Burnt Brick, Stone, Cement, Mosaic/Floor Tiles) is treated as 'Any other'. Now focusing the use of predominant floor material in house. Table 4.4 presents a comparative study in west Bengal as in Paschim Medinipur District and in Midnapore Town in 2011.

Table 4.4
Material of Floor, West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and
Midnapore Town, 2011

Material of Floor	Percentage of Urban Households			Gap (in percentage)	
	West Bengal	Paschim Medinipur District	Midnapore Town	Between State and Town	Between District and Town
Mud	21.33	29.60	18.40	2.93	11.20
Wood/ Bamboo	0.44	0.10	0.00	0.44	0.10
Burnt Brick	2.08	1.60	0.90	1.18	0.70
Stone	1.59	0.90	1.50	0.09	-0.60
Cement	67.47	64.20	74.10	-6.63	-9.90
Mosaic/ Floor tiles	6.97	3.50	5.00	1.97	-1.50
Any other material	0.12	0.10	0.10	0.02	0.00

Source: *Houselisting & Housing Census, West Bengal, 2011.*

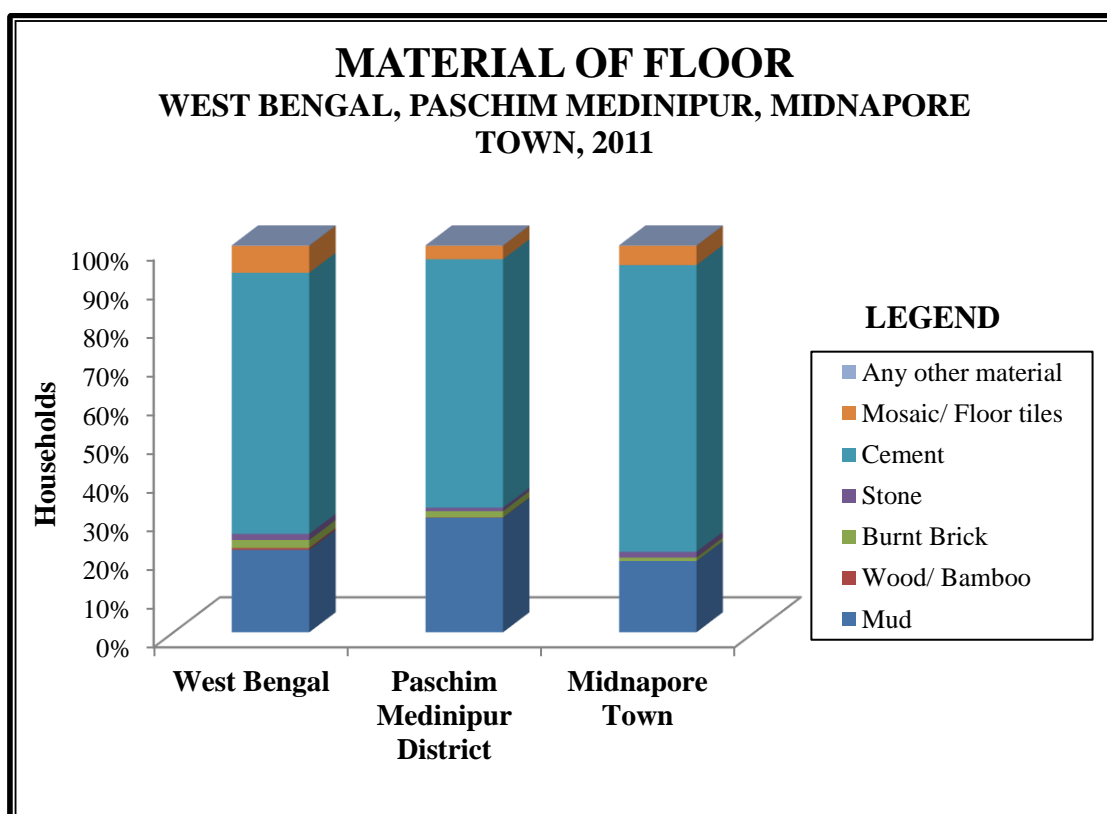


Figure 4.4

The comparative study from Census 2011 indicates that the cement is the predominant material for the purpose of floor construction followed by mud, Mosaic/ Floor tiles and burnt brick at state level or at district level as well as in Midnapore Town also. In Midnapore Town, more than two-third households used cement for floor construction. The corresponding share for the state is about 68 percent and for district is about 65 percent. It is noted that the position of Midnapore Town is quite better (near about 75 percent) than state and district level. It is observed from the table that share of mud and burnt brick floored houses are less in town than state level and also than district level. Whereas, share of the floor of the houses made by mosaic/ floor tiles and stone in town is less than state level and more than district level. Materials used for floor of the house across the wards of the town are also found with great variation in the last Census.

It is assumed that poor migrated people reside in peripheral areas and used mud for floor construction whereas; economically sound people are used cement, stone and mosaic material or floor tiles for floor.

4.5 Materials of Wall:

Materials of walls are a significant indicator of QoL of households. Census of India (2011) classifies it into ten predominant materials. The first category is likely to be categorised as permanent material (G.I./ metal/ asbestos sheets, burnt brick, concrete), the latter (stone not packed with mortar) is likely to be treated as non-permanent material. In case of any confusion on account of the outside surface being plastered and painted, the predominant material of the wall is to be ascertained from the respondent. In case of walls made of mud, unburnt brick or brick plastered with cement and painted, it is not possible to record the material

accurately. In such cases, the actual material such as 'mud/ unburnt brick' or 'burnt brick' is ascertained from the respondent. In case the respondent expressed his ignorance about the material, it was classified as 'any other'. The following table 4.5 represents the comparative account of predominant materials used for wall construction in West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur district and in Midnapore Town for the year 2011.

Table 4.5
Material of Wall, West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and
Midnapore Town, 2011

Material of Wall	Percentage of Urban Households			Gap (in percentage)	
	West Bengal	Paschim Medinipur District	Midnapore Town	Between State and Town	Between District and Town
Grass/ Thatch/ Bamboo etc.	7.85	5.80	2.40	5.45	3.40
Plastic/ Polythene	0.51	0.40	0.30	0.21	0.10
Mud/ Unburnt brick	8.20	25.40	16.30	-8.10	9.10
Wood	0.58	0.10	0.10	0.48	0.00
Stone not packed with mortar	0.90	0.70	0.50	0.40	0.20
Stone packed with mortar	1.37	1.50	0.50	0.87	1.00
G.I./ Metal/ Asbestos sheets	1.23	0.10	0.00	1.23	0.10
Burnt brick	71.73	61.60	73.90	-2.17	-12.30
Concrete	7.36	4.30	6.00	1.36	-1.70
Any other material	0.28	0.00	0.00	0.28	0.00

Source: *Houselisting & Housing Census, West Bengal, 2011.*

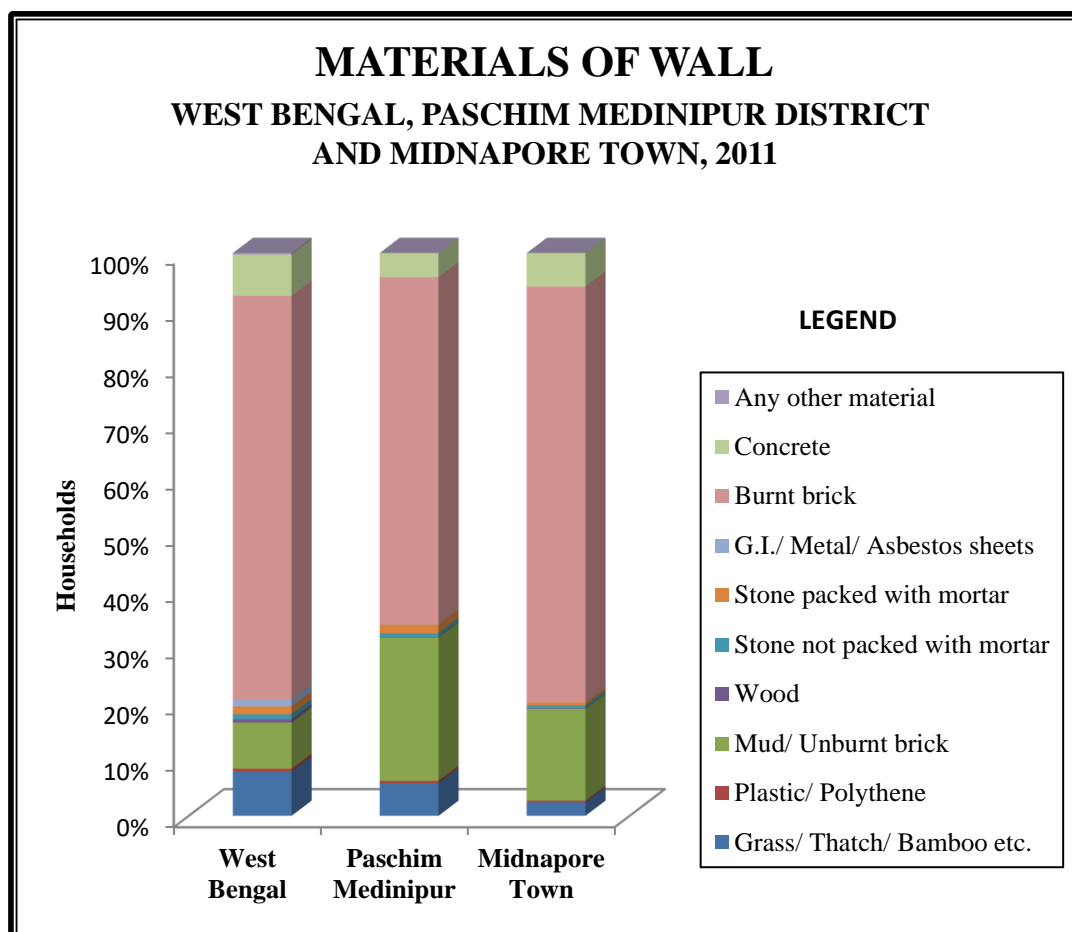


Figure 4.5

Above table derived from 2011 Census shows that burnt brick is used in highest proportion for wall construction followed by mud/ unburnt brick, concrete and grass/ thatch/ bamboo etc. in Midnapore Town, Paschim Medinipur District and as in West Bengal. More than three-fifth households of Midnapore Town, Paschim Medinipur District and West Bengal are having burnt

bricked made wall. The share for the Midnapore Town in terms of burnt brick for wall building is more than district level and state level. But use of grass/ thatch/ bamboo etc. and stone in this town is less in share than district level and state level also. On the other hand, use of mud/ unburnt brick in Midnapore Town is less in share than district level and more in share than state level. Likewise, use of concrete for wall construction in Midnapore Town is less in proportion than state level and more than district level.

4.6 Materials of Roof:

The materials use for wall is grouped in nine categories according to the latest census like, grass/ thatch/ bamboo/ wood/ mud etc., plastic/ polythene, handmade tiles, machine made tiles, burnt brick, stone/ slate, G.I./ metal/ asbestos sheets, concrete and any other materials. With regards to the use of roof materials, nature of the house and quality of life of the households of any areal unit are assessed. Following table (4.6) presents comparative study in terms of roof construction materials of the house in West Bengal, in Paschim Medinipur District and as in Midnapore Town in 2011.

Table 4.6
Material of Roof, West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur District and
Midnapore Town, 2011

Material of Roof	Percentage of Urban Households			Gap (in percentage)	
	West Bengal	Paschim Medinipur District	Midnapore Town	Between State and Town	Between District and Town
Grass/ Thatch/ Bamboo/ Wood/Mud etc.	2.23	6.80	4.60	-2.37	2.20
Plastic/ Polythene	0.79	0.90	0.90	-0.11	0.00
Handmade Tiles	19.93	5.00	7.20	12.73	-2.20
Machine made Tiles	9.10	3.40	3.40	5.70	0.00
Burnt Brick	0.99	0.70	0.60	0.39	0.10
Stone/ Slate	2.08	1.50	1.00	1.08	0.50
G.I./Metal/ Asbestos sheets	16.17	29.70	17.60	-1.43	12.10
Concrete	48.43	51.60	64.00	-15.57	-12.40
Any other material	0.29	0.30	0.50	-0.21	-0.20

Source: *Houselisting & Housing Census, West Bengal, 2011.*

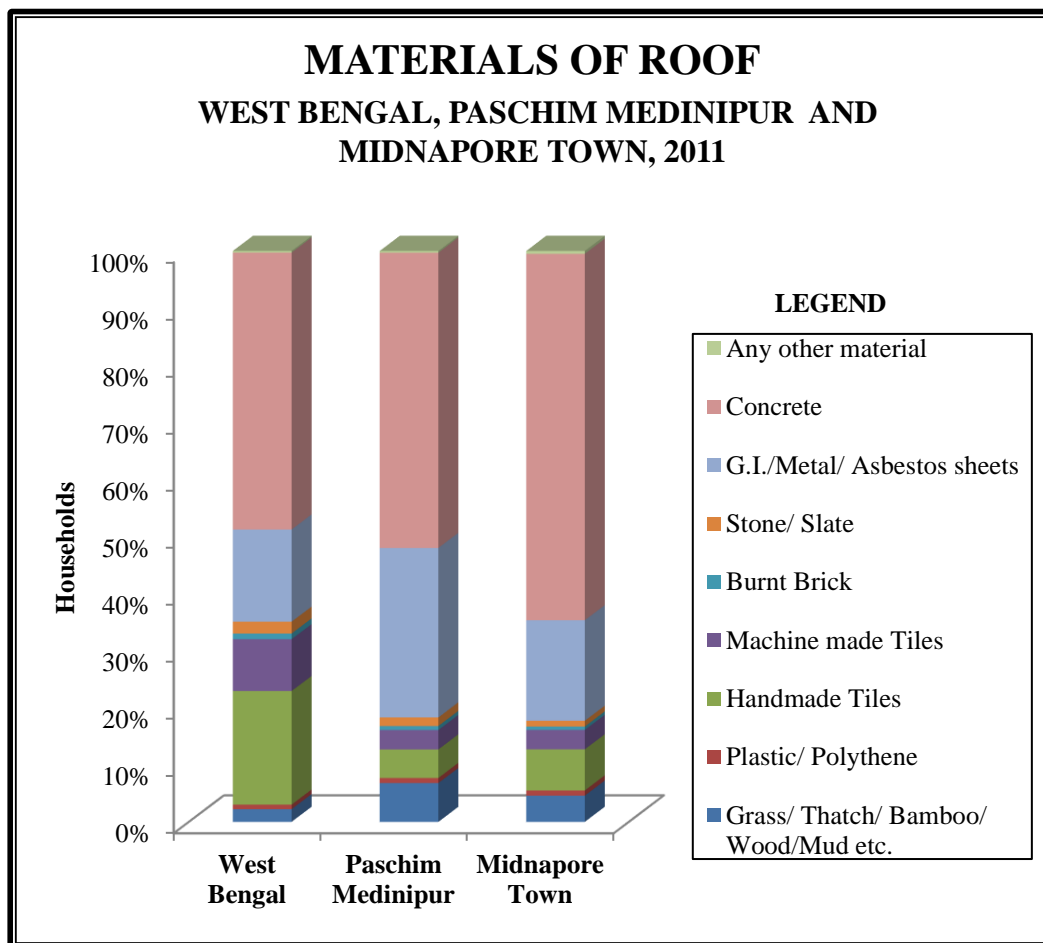


Figure 4.6

It is important to note that the predominant material used for roof construction in the State, district and as well as in town level as per 2011 is concrete. It is used by more than half of the households of the district. But the corresponding share for state level less than 50 percent. In Midnapore Town, more than two-third households are used concrete for wall construction. Use G.I./ metal/ asbestos sheets and grass/ thatch/ bamboo/ wood/ mud etc. for roof construction town's share is less than district level share and more than state level share. But the use of handmade tiles for above purpose in the town is less than state level and more than district level. There is a great variation in the use of concrete and handmade tiles for roof construction in three areal units.

5.CONCLUSION:

It is mentioned earlier that Midnapore Town is the district headquarters of Paschim Medinipur district in West Bengal. Presently, urban area of Midnapore is mainly prosper and expand as an administrative cum commercial centre along with industrial activities and different types of informal activities. The study reveals that Midnapore Town has the better housing conditions as compared to state level and district level.

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