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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ASANSOL, “THE CITY OF BROTHERHOOD” TOWARDS THE DEN OF CRIMINALIZATION. A PERSPECTIVE STUDY OF RELATIVE CONCENTRATION OF CRIME IN THE “CRIME-NEXUS”.

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Abstract

The social disorganization and crime has direct relationship with that of physical space as each and every body or organization along with human society is established in definite geographical space. Whereas crime is a self explanatory term signifying groups or individual's action against social well being and is thus punishable under legal system. The relative extend and the concentration of crime is thus influencing the space directly. The city of Asansol sub-division in the Western part of Burdwan, West Bengal is experiencing an immense change from mining- industrial to commercial one, and is rapidly adding stimuli to the change in social order and facing spatial concentration of various types of crime. Here urbanization is not only the cause of rising crime trend, but there are also some other determinants which are closely related to it such as inflation, unemployment and income inequality. During past few years the increased crime rate of the foresaid area converted it to be a 'crime-nexus'. The study here aims at identifying the relative nature of concentration of types of crime in the area. The delineation of the more crime prone zones of this Sub-Division shall also be peeped into during the course of this paper.

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Introduction:-

“A crime is any act or omission prohibited by public law for the protection of the public and punishable by state in a judicial proceeding in its own name”- Marshall and Clark (1952). Crime is basically a human behavior, which is determined by the surrounding social environment existing around the offender. It is an activity which is against the law. Geography, as a special science deals with space and time of causes and consequences of crime. It is totally undeniable that there is a linkage between socio-economic development of the society and the criminal activities. As the subject of crime is a complex one in nature, criminology, sociology, psychology, geography, demography and other various academic disciplines study it from their own perspectives. The following work is a study of crime in relation to space which includes the find out of the major crimes dominating area, identification of relative concentration of the major types of crime and recommendation of some measures for reducing crime in the study area.

Study area and its location:-

Being located at the Western part of the district of Burdwan in West Bengal, Asansol is within 86°48' E to 87°15' E and 23°33' N to 23°55' N. The Asansol sub-division comprises of Asansol, Kulti, Raniganj, Hiranpur, Jamuriya, Salanpur, Barabani and Chittaranjan Police Station. It is located between two mighty rivers, Damodar and Ajay. The settlement in the city of Asansol has been found since 1774 but the real revolution of the city has started in 1911 with the establishment of Asansol Municipality which converted into Asansol Municipal Corporation in 1994 which comprises of 127.237 sq. km with 50 wards now a days.

Physical Environment and Socio-Cultural Sketch:-

With an average elevation of 97 meters, Asansol sub-division is of flat alluvial plain which consists mostly of barren, bare and rolling land with some where laterite covers and lies on exposed Gondwana rocks within two mighty rivers Damodar and Ajay. The area lies in the humid tropical monsoon regime with the mean temperature of 32°C (Summer) and 17°C (winter) and receives average annual rainfall of 1470 mm.

With the discovery of coal and organized mining in the Raniganj. Asansol by John Summer and Grant Healthy of the East India Company the history of Asansol came into existence in 1774. East India Railway Co. set up its Divisional Head Quarters at Asansol in 1904. In 1911, Asansol got Municipal status and provided a nucleus for the present urban agglomeration. The city is economy is based primary on coal and steel industries. Being a central city for the coal belts it is heavily industrialized. The local culture and dialect of the region have very closer communication with those of Bishnupur and Bankura than that of other neighbouring areas. Asansol is also an important education hub, consisting four general colleges, two engineering college, three polytechnic institutions and many Bengali and English medium schools. The study area also includes many interesting places of visit. Mention may be made of Maithon and Panchet Dam of Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC), a major railway engineers manufacturing hub under the Ministry of Railways, Government of India-Chittaranjan, Coal mining and factories of Kulti, Damodar river linking Burdwan to Dhanbad of Barakar, major coal mining areas of Raniganj, Nehru Park of Burnpur providing natural beauty of River Damodar etc.

Methodology:-

The data for the proposed study has been collected both from primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data has been collected from published and unpublished records and reports from Asansol Circle Inspector Office and First Information Reports (FIR) from different police stations of Asansol Sub-Division and in the form of in depth series of oral interviews with different officials, common people and resources persons where as secondary data sources includes different books, magazines and sites.

Types and categorization of crime:-

Crime nature is something different in an urban industrial area than that rural residential one. Crime rate is directly proportional to the level of urbanization and there are various types of crime depending upon crime criteria and its perspectives.

Crime according to the administration	Dacoity
	Robbery
	Burglary
	Theft
	Murder
	Homicide
	Kidnapping
	Assault
Crime according to age	Juvenile
	Delinquency Committed by Adolescents.
	Offences committed by Adults
Crime according to objectives	Property Crime
	Personal Crime
Crime according to organization	Illegal drug trade
	Arms trafficking
	Corruption

Source: Asansol circle office and Asansol Sub-Division Police Stations.

Penal code categories crime in India (in brief):-

- A. Offences relating to attempt to commit offences.
- B. Offences relating to marriage.
- C. Offences affecting human body.
- D. Offences against property
- E. Offences against lawful authority
- F. Offences relating to elections
- G. Offences against public tranquility
- H. Offences relating to Army, Navy and Air force
- I. Offences against the state.

Asansol sub-division is based on mining and industries. The local police stations maintain the crime charts which are classified into types of crime, that is Dacoity, Burglary, Robbery, Theft and Murder. While the Theft cases have been categorized into house theft, illegal mining, snatching and other theft etc. the murder cases has been classified into murder, homicide and culpable homicide etc. The theft cases rank highest among all crime here.

Crime chart of Asansol Sub-Division (2005-2015)

Place	Dacoity	Burglary	Robbery	Theft	Rioting	Murder / C.H.
Asansol	17	40	43	535	137	130
Raniganj	11	20	10	225	47	70
Hirapur	2	13	15	210	39	102
Barabani	4	8	5	97	43	36
Jamuria	21	23	19	360	69	122
Salanpur	7	7	5	79	38	26
Kulti	13	15	20	142	91	61
Chittaranjan	9	20	9	175	17	70

Source: Asansol circle office and Asansol Sub-Division Police Stations.

The crime chart recorded for last ten years in the local Police Stations shows a general feature of crime in all categories without identifying the theft cases of coal in particular which includes coal crime in the form of supply of coal without license and illegal coal mining.

Relative concentration of crime:-

The maximum concentration of the Dacoity cases are in Chittaranjan and Salanpur. The main factor behind this is the inter-state border between Jharkhand and Bengal. As the border runs in between so in Chittaranjan, there are two police stations, inspite of that there is occurrence of maximum number of Dacoity in this region as per record of police stations of West Bengal.

Jamuria consists of minimum population due to its rural base and mining economy which results the increasing opportunity of Robbery there. Thus in Jamuria sub-division relative concentration of Robbery is found.

Salanpur, being dominated by industrial economy stands highest is cases of Burglary similar to that of case of Dacoity. Closure of Indian Iron and Steel Co (IISCO) has upraised the crisis of security and increased the rate of unemployment there which resulted the area to face maximum concentration of Burglary offences.

Theft cases are found to be at its apex in the urban areas of Asansol sub-division. Maximum concentration of theft in terms of house, mobiles, motors, cars, snatching and other are affecting Asansol Municipal Corporation. Due to concentration of coal mines near it, Barabani-Sub Division and Raniganj also suffers from illegal mining.

Suffered from unorganized growth and haphazard settlement pressure and due to its location in urban periphery of Asansol City, Hirapur rank first in the spatial concentration of the Murder cases human temperament has strong positive correlation with clumsiness, cacophony, and crowd. Thus Hirapur is marked with high incidence of crime like murder, culpable homicide as excessive heat of urban area encourage irritation and provoke to act violently.

Delineation of More Crime Prone Zones:-

Incidence and Rate of Violent Crimes in West Bengal and in India (During 2015)

	Murder (Sec. 302 IPC)	Attempt to commit murder (Sec-337 IPC)	Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)	Kidnapping & Abduction (Sec 363-370 & 371-373 IPC)	Dacoity (Sec 395-398 IPC)
West Bengal	2139	2278	2389	4321	273
India	34399	31462	24300	44732	4385

Source: www.nerb.nic.in

The two dynamic and societal processes of urbanization and industrialization lead to greater physical mobility for the individual over the time where an individual is displaced by a sudden change and bound him or her to plunge into new social environments consisting new rules of behavior prevail, traditional regulatory institutions and social sanctions tend to make the individual ineffective to be simple and easy to adopt deviant patterns of behavior. Moreover increase in crime and other forms of social disorganization can be directly associated the high rate of migration among societies which can be also viewed as a source of social strain.

According to J.N. Gerban (2007), the residents in the rural areas are less confronted with crime because of higher levels of social cohesion and in formed social control and lower offender rates in a well ordered physical surrounding. Criminals live more frequently in cities in which their crimes are concentrated in city centers and their surroundings. The greater the distance to the city centre, the less crime occurs. Thus being an urban area and based on mining and industries Asansol became the nexus of criminal activities.

The spatial variation or concentration of crime in a particular area seems to be different in character and the factors behind them also varies. Salanpur and Chittaranjan are the most crime prone areas. Being situate at the periphery near inter-state border here the crime composition confirms that the crimes are not only related to the social factor, but is also dependent upon the geographical space. Where as being the sub-divisional head quarter and main administrative town, Asansol is less crime prone and only theft cases dominates the area. Or the other hand being industrial area Chittaranjan – Salanpur area is with more complexity and crimes. Heavier crimes area also found in Raniganj, Jamuria, being situated in mining belts but the pattern of crime here is different than that of other towns.

A very prominent fact in this area is high incidence of unreported crime due to low policing and more informal nature of law enforcement in rural areas other than Asansol town. The rate of crime has a negative relationship with the spatial concentration.

Crime Rate of Sub Divisions of Asansol (2015)

Towns	Total	Total Population	Crime Rate (Per'000)
Asansol	508	563,917	0.9008
Kulti	263	313,809	0.8381
Raniganj	152	129,441	1.1743
Jamuria	198	145,276	1.3629
Salanpur	101	156,364	0.6459
Barabani	93	110,425	0.8422
Hirapur	137	79,268	1.7283
Chittaranjan	57	49,098	1.1609

Source: Asansol Circle office and Police Stations of Asansol Sub-Division

The crime rate decreases with the increase in concentration. The crime chart of the study area has shown that crime rate is correlated positively with population size. So it can be concluded that the spatial concentration of crime is directly proportional to the population size of the town and is inversely related to the distance from the centre.

Concluding Remarks:-

Crime is a social hazard and most active in urban industrial society due to degradation of social environment of the area. The increasing urbanization causes less integration among people which results in less informal social control which together explains higher levels of crime, disorder, victimization and fear of crime. The evident impacts of industrialization and urbanization on the reasons of crime results to promote changes in social structure, cultural conflict, change in space environment thereby induces an increasing number of criminal elements. The disruption of cultural values and morality is other characteristic of urbanized way of life which also accounts to the crime augmentation. Reduction of crime is a practical part of criminology. But in geography, it is to analyse and interpret criminal activities and patterns over space. This kind of vivid study is an essential part of geography of crime to detect the crime prone areas of a particular place. Making of several crime concentration maps can help the location and establishment of police stations and check posts for the security, protection purpose and benediction of mankind.

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