

Role of service sector information for micro-planning: a case study

Partha Pratim Ray¹ and Bidhan Ch. Biswas²

¹Librarian, Institute of Education, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan-731235, West Bengal, Email:rayparth1@rediffmail.com

²Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kalyani, Kalyani- 741 235, West Bengal,
Email:bidhan_kly@yahoo.com

The principle of democratic decentralization has made districts as nodal points for the general administration and contributing to the welfare of the people. With the creation of District Planning Committee (DPC), the focus of development plan has been shifted from macro to micro level planning considering district or even Community Development (CD) block as basic administrative units. For proper planning, information of the existing service sector facilities and its assessment is essential. The present paper attempts to examine and assess availability, distribution and identify gaps in the development process of service sector facilities like education, library, transportation, posts and telegraph, health, drinking water, power supply of community development block, Bolpur-Srinikaten. The study was conducted on the basis of simple and relative weighted score of service sectors activities of the block under study. It is observed from the study that service sector facilities are unevenly distributed and knowledge-communication is the most neglected service sector in Bolpur-Srinikaten.

Introduction

Since independence, India has been following a policy of “growth with social justice” as stated in Article 38 of Indian Constitution (Directive Principles of State Policy). Clause 2, part 7 of the 44th Constitutional amendment in 1998 states “the state shall in particular, strive to minimize the inequalities in services, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also among groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocation”¹. To minimize disparity ‘decentralization’ is necessary as it is a “process whereby the government divests itself completely of certain duties and responsibilities and devolves them on to some other authority within its jurisdiction, reserving for itself only the function of guidance, supervision and higher planning”². Decentralized planning, which has become synonymous with the concept of district planning or area planning is the sub-state-decision making stage within multi-level planning system.

Planning involves the process of control and direction over major economic variables for desired development. Economic planning is, therefore “the conscious governmental effort to influence, direct, and in some cases even control changes in the principal economic variables (consumption, investment, savings, exports, imports etc.) of a country or region over a course of time in order to achieve a predetermined set of

objectives. The essence of planning is summed up in these notions of government influence, direction and control”³. Planning from development perspective should include as an explicit goal, the satisfaction of the absolute level of basic needs, which involve two elements, “first, they include certain minimum requirements of a family for private consumption, adequate food, shelter and clothing... second, they include essential services provided by and for community at large such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, health and education facilities”⁴.

Seventy third Constitutional amendment empowers Panchyati Raj institutions to prepare plans for economic development. Emphasis is on ‘decentralized planning’, ‘planning from the below’, ‘grass-root planning’ or ‘area planning’. “The formation of area development plan, which requires the integration and coordination of the activities of different sectors, can be undertaken, at least for the present, only at district level”⁵. Article 243 ZD of Indian Constitution states that “there shall be constituted in every state at the district level, a district planning committee to consolidate the plan prepared by the Panchyats and the Municipalities in the district and to prepare a draft development plan for district as a whole”⁶. Community Development (CD) Blocks are considered ideal for this purpose because they are much smaller than districts and yet are larger than villages which may be too small for planning purpose.

Information or data are the basic input for planning. Only after analyzing the data can one develop plan, set up objectives (targets) for development, direct and coordinate the efforts of functionaries and motivate people to achieve the desired goal in the predetermined path. Again only after analyzing /interpreting data can one measure the development and take corrective measures⁷. Not only that, research and development programmes can be accomplished successfully only if the required information becomes available as and when needed. Without proper and complete information, no worthwhile decision can be drawn. In fact, no progress is possible without the support of information⁸. Since the service sector facilities change the quality of life of the people⁹, information on service sector and assessment of its activities as an indicator of development are essential for planning and its sustainability.

Area profile

Bolpur-Sriniketan development block is one of the community development blocks of Birbhum district of West Bengal. The block has rich flora and fauna. The land of the district in general is fertile. Birbhum is as such regarded as 'Granary of Bengal'. The total land surface area of the block is 331.53 square kilometre, having a total population of 17,78,000. The majority of the population lives in rural area. Bolpur is the only municipal town situated in the middle of community development block with a population of 74,000 in an area of 108 square kilometer. Apart from municipality, there is a statutory body named Santiniketan-Sriniketan Development Authority (SSDA) which covers 108 square kilometer as planning area of the block. The famous Visva-Bharati University founded by Rabindranath Tagore having more than 5 kilometer campus is also located in the block. The block consisting of 167 villages is divided in 9 Panchyats namely Bahiri Panchshoa, Kankalitala, Kasba, Raipur Super, Ruppur, Sarpabhana Albandha, Sattore, Sian Muluk and Singhee¹⁰.

Objectives of the study

- To provide information about the service sector facilities in Bolpur-Sriniketan development block;
- To provide information about strengths and weakness of service sector facilities in the said block; and
- To make qualitative and quantitative assessment of the service sector facilities in the said block.

Methodology

The data were obtained from District Census Handbook 2001¹¹ and Annual Reports of Rural Library Services of Rural Extension Centre, Visva-Bharati. The quantitative assessment of the service sector activities have been made on the basis of simple and relative weighted score at Panchyat level as well as on the individual service sectors. The service sector facilities considered for this study are education, library, transportation, posts and telegraph, health, drinking water and power supply facilities available in the villages of Bolpur-Sriniketan block. The education facilities consist of schools of all kinds like primary, middle, secondary, senior secondary, junior school and also college and adult literacy classes. Library facilities include public libraries and rural libraries sponsored by West Bengal Government and Visva-Bharati in collaboration with Raja Rammohun Ray Library Foundation (RRRLF). Transportation facilities include bus and railway services. In the health services facilities allopathic, ayurvedic and homeopathic dispensaries, maternity and child welfare centres, community health workers, registered medical practitioners, primary health centres, sub centres and nursing homes have been considered. Drinking water facilities include tube wells, wells, tank and water supply through pipelines. Power supply facilities consist of power supply for domestic use, agriculture and other purposes.

From Table 1 it is observed that highest and lowest populated Panchyats are Ruppur and Sarpabhana Albandha respectively. On the other hand Sian Muluk and Singhee have the highest (24) and lowest (14) number of villages. Service sector facilities in each Panchyats are indicated in the Table 2. From Table 2 it is clear that Sattore Panchyat has the lowest number of service sector facilities (91) and Kankalitala has the highest (164)

Table1 — Demography of Bolpur-Sriniketan

Sl. No.	Name of the panchyat	No. of villages	Population size
1	Bahiri Panchshoa	18	20,919
2	Kankalitala	22	19,058
3	Kasba	18	13,917
4	Raipur Supur	19	21,679
5	Ruppur	17	28,666
6	Sarpabhana Albandha	17	11,797
7	Sattore	18	18,740
8	Sian Muluk	24	20,178
9	Singhee	14	22,920

Total 167 17,77,874

Source: District Census Handbook, Birbhum, 2001

Table 2 — Distribution of service sector facilities in different panchyats

Service Sector	Panchyats									Total number of service units
	Bahiri Panchshoa	Kankalitala	Kasba	Raipur Supur	Ruppur	Sarpabhana Albandha	Sattore	Sian Muluk	Singhee	
Education	26	22	24	21	38	20	17	13	17	198
Library	01	03	04	09	09	02	06	02	01	37
Transportation	11	11	05	03	08	09	04	09	06	66
Post & Telegraph	14	22	06	10	13	05	06	13	06	95
Health	22	32	21	33	19	19	07	15	52	220
Drinking Water	17	23	17	05	17	17	17	21	14	148
Power Supply	51	51	54	41	35	40	30	18	54	374
Total	142	164	131	122	139	112	87	91	150	1138

Source: District Census Handbook, Birbhum, 2001 and Annual Report Rural Library Services, Visva-Bharati, 2007-08

Table 3 — Functional weightage of different service sector facilities

Service Sector Facility	Total number of service units(a)	Total number of villages(b)	Functional weightage Fw (a / b)
Education	198	167	1.18
Library	37	167	0.22
Transportation	66	167	0.39
Post & Telegraph	95	167	0.59
Health	220	167	1.32
Drinking Water	148	167	0.87
Power Supply	374	167	2.24

Source: District Census Handbook, Birbhum, 2001

number of such facilities. To calculate functional weightage (Fw) of different service sectors facilities, the following simple formula has been used:

$$Fw = \frac{\text{Sum of service unit in the CD Block}}{\text{Number of villages in the CD Block}}$$

Thus, the functional weightage of Library would be:
 $37/167 = 0.22$

From Table 3 it is clear that the functional weightage is highest in the service sector power supply and lowest in library. On the basis of Fw, the data have again been converted into functional weighted score (WC) of each service sector facility for individual Panchyats.

$$(WC) = \frac{\text{Total number of service units in the block} \times \text{No. of service units in each Panchayat}}{\text{Number of villages in the block}}$$

Or, WC = Functional Weightage (Fw) x No. of service units in each Panchyat.

Thus, weighted score (WC) for library facilities of Raipur Supur Panchyat would be $.22 \times 9 = 1.98$

Again, mean weighted score (MWC) in percentage for individual Panchyats may be calculated on the basis of weighted score computed in Table 4 by applying the following formula:

$$MWC = \frac{\text{Sum of columns of individual Panchyats}}{\text{Sum of column and row}} \times 100$$

$$= \frac{\text{Sum C}}{\text{Sum of RC}} \times 100$$

For example, MWC for Bahiri would be $(201.52 / 1590.43) \times 100 = 12.67$

From Table 5 it is clear that in respect of development indicator, Singhee is the best Panchyat and Sian Muluk in the worst Panchyat in the CD block under study.

Table 4 — Weighted score of panchyats

Service Sector facility	Weighted score (WC) of Panchyats									Total Score (C) (% in bracket)
	Bahiri Panchshoa	Kankalitala	Kasba	Raipur Supur	Ruppur	Sarpabhana Albandha	Sattore Muluk	Sian	Singhee	
Education	30.68	25.96	28.32	24.78	44.84	23.60	20.06	15.34	20.06	233.64 (14.69)
Library	0.22	0.66	0.88	1.98	1.98	0.44	1.32	0.44	0.22	8.14 (0.51)
Transportation	4.29	4.29	1.95	1.17	3.12	3.51	1.56	3.51	2.34	25.74 (1.62)
Post & Telegraph	8.26	12.90	3.54	5.90	7.67	2.95	3.54	7.67	3.54	55.97 (3.52)
Health	29.04	42.24	27.72	43.56	35.08	25.08	9.24	19.80	68.64	300.40 (18.88)
Drinking Water	14.79	20.01	14.79	4.35	14.79	14.79	14.79	18.27	12.18	128.76 (8.10)
Power Supply	114.24	114.24	120.96	91.84	78.40	89.60	67.20	40.32	120.98	837.78 (52.68)
Total (RC)	201.52	220.30	198.16	173.58	185.88	159.97	117.71	105.35	227.96	1590.4(RC)
Percentage (R)	(12.67)	(13.85)	(12.46)	(10.92)	(11.69)	(10.06)	(7.40)	(6.62)	(14.33)	(100.00)
Rank of Panchyats										
On the basis of R	3	2	4	6	5	7	8	9	1	

Mean weighted score of each service sector as a whole of the CD Block as derived from Table 5 and its corresponding rank is shown in the Table 6.

Findings

From the study it is clear that the basic service sector facilities are unevenly distributed (Table 2).

Among the service sector facilities considered for this study, the most neglected are library, transportation, post and telegraph. The Panchyat of Sian Muluk, Sattore, Sarpabhana Albandha, and Raipur Supur scored very low point in respect of overall development indicator. (Table-5). Thus, developments of different Panchyats are not equal.

Overall all assessment of the service sectors reveals that power supply is good, health, education service is moderate in urban areas but rural area is neglected, drinking water and post & telegraph is poor in general but moderate in urban areas, transportation and library service in particular is very poor.

Discussion

In the villages of Bolpur-Sriniketan community development block there are 198 educational centres, distributed in 9 village panchayats. Thus on an average, there are 22 educational centres per village panchayat. For attending schools, students have to cover 5 kilometers on an average. Almost all the schools are run by the government. There is lack of infrastructure and teacher-student ratio is low. Form the quantitative analysis it is

observed that mean weighted score on education is 233.64 which is just 14.69% of total service sector. Thus, keeping in mind the population size, attention must be paid on establishment of more schools (including technical and vocational training school), rising of teacher-student ratio and provision for adequate infrastructure¹².

Library service is the most neglected service sector facility in the block though public library act was passed in West Bengal in 1979. There are only 7 Government sponsored public libraries in the block. In two Panchyats, namely Kankalitala and Sattore, there is no government sponsored public library. However there are 30 libraries in the block sponsored by Visva-Bharati and RRRLF, Kolkata, as indicated in Table 7.

In two panchyats, Bahiri Panchshoa and Singhee there is no Visva-Bharati and RRRLF sponsored library. Actually these libraries are mostly situated in villages adjoining Visva-bharati. The number of books and other infrastructure of these libraries are moderate. In the financial year 2007-08, the total books of these libraries were 93,595 and fund allotted was Rs. Five lakh¹³.

The public library service concept was developed and initiated with the very inception of Rabindranath Tagore's Sriniketan Experiment of Rural Reconstruction. Tagore believed that "for the fundamental purpose of education is not merely to enrich ourselves through the fullness of knowledge, but also to establish the bond of love and friendship between man and man"¹⁴. For that he suggests

Table 5—Mean Weighted Score of Panchyats

Sl. No.	Panchyats	MWC in %	Rank
1	Bahiri Panchshoa	12.67	3
2	Kankalitala	13.85	2
3	Kasba	12.46	4
4	Raipur Supur	10.92	6
5	Ruppur	11.69	5
6	Sarpabhana Albandha	10.06	7
7	Sattore	7.40	8
8	Sian Muluk	6.62	9
9	Singhee	14.33	1
Total			100.00

Table 6—MWC of Different Service Sector

Service Sector	MWC in %	Rank of Service sector
Education	14.69	3
Library	00.51	7
Transportation	01.62	6
Post & Telegraph	03.52	5
Health	18.89	2
Drinking Water	08.09	4
Power Supply	52.68	1
Total	100.00	

Table 7 — Sponsored Library of Visva-Bharati and RRRLF

Sl. No.	Panchyats	No of Library
1	Kankalitala	3
2	Kasba	3
3	Raipur Supur	8
4	Ruppur	8
5	Sarpabhana Albandha	1
6	Sattore	6
7	Sian Muluk	1

Source: Report on Rural Library Service, Visva-Bharati

Table 8 — Collection development and use of Chalantika: 1929-1934

Year	No. of books	No of books issued
1929	450	729
1930	390	709
1931	400	600
1932	461	950
1933	512	1474
1934	1087	2457

Source: Visva-Bharati Annual Report: 1929-34

“ the highest educational institutions should assimilate knowledge from all sources and disseminate it for the benefit of the masses in order to strengthen their own foundation”¹⁵ as it has clearly been stated in one of the objectives of Sriniketan which is, “to carry the knowledge and experience gained in the class-room and farm to the village”¹⁶. To fulfill this motto, public library services in the form of mobile library services named “*Chalantika*” started in the year 1925 with initial collection of 200 books¹⁷. The Table 8 indicates collection development and its use by the rural masses in the initial years of its establishment.

Transportation indicates road and railway communication. There is ample scope for developments of secondary road network in the Panchyats for easy accessibility to Panchyat office and also with block headquarter at Bolpur. It has clearly been reflected in the weighted score of transportation (25.74 which is just 1.62% of the total service sector). For improvement of quality of life good transportation and communication services is a pre requisite. The study indicates a marginal score in this sector and requires urgent attention.

The growth of postal communication, particularly Telegraph, has been observed in last 2-3 years. Apart from Bolpur and Visva-Bharti area there are 27 post offices and more than 100 telephone booths. For improvement of quality of life, goods transportation and communication services are a pre-requisite. The study indicates a marginal score in this sector, which requires an urgent attention.

In the block there are 220 health care units. But the figure does not indicate the quality of service. Except sub-divisional hospital at Sian-Muluk, there is lack of doctors and facilities, low maintenance of health centers which lead to poor quality of service. As a result, illegal medical practices by unqualified persons are reported. This problem is also reflected in a study conducted by Pratichi Trust founded by Noble laureate Amartya Sen¹⁸.

Water supply in the community development block has improved in the last five years with the completion of water supply project of the block with financial as well as technical collaboration of German Government. As a result, Bolpur municipality and 49 mouzas (a small group of villages) have been covered by piped line water supply. But the supply is time bound. The score of domestic

water supply is 128.76 which is just 8.10 % of total service sector.

Durgapur Power Plant is the main source of power supply in the block. Three feeder units are located at Makrampur, Moldanga and Mirzapur. Power supply is more or less satisfactory as it ranked 1 with score value of 837.78 which is 52.68 % of total service sector.

Conclusion

This study has been made only in nine panchyats of community development block Bolpur-Sriniketan on the basic assumption that census data are authentic. Besides the selected seven service sector facilities, other sectors like bank, industry, agriculture, etc., can also be considered. Immediate action plan has to be drawn up for development of the core service sector facilities and its implementation through local self government. For successful implementation, there is need for coordination between civic authorities, municipal authorities, the SSDA and the gram panchyats. The local libraries should come forward to provide the necessary information support at both organizational and individual levels for effective micro-planning and successful implementation of the plan.

References

1. Vyasulu Vinod , *Panchyats, democracy and development* ,(Rawat Publications; Jaipur),2003, p.195.
2. India Govt. of, *Report of the team for the study of community projects and national extension service*, (Committee on plan reports; New Delhi) , 1957, p.1, 7.
3. Todaro M P , *Economics for developing world*, (Longman; London), 1997, p.361-62.
4. ILO. *Employment growth and basic needs: one world problem*, (Report of the Director General ILO; Geneva), 1976, p.31.
5. India Govt. of , *Guidelines for the formation of district plans* , (Planning Commission; New Delhi), 1999, p.5
6. Ibid.p.99.
7. Ray P P, *Information communication in rural development: some aspects and prospect*; in, Knowledge Management in Special Libraries in Digital Environment (IASLIC 2003), p.375.
8. Prasher R G , *Information and its communication* , (Medallion Press; New Delhi),1991, p.21.
9. Buch N M , *Environmental consciousness and urban planning: tracts for the time*, (Orient Longman; New Delhi),1993, p.2.
10. West Bengal Govt. of , *District statistical handbook 2004: Birbhum*, (Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics; Kolkata), 2004.
11. West Bengal Govt. of , *District census handbook: Birbhum district.2001*, (Directorate of Census Operation; Kolkata),2001.
12. Sen Amartya, *The Pratichi education Report* ,(Pratichi Trust; Santiniketan), 2001, p.12.
13. *Annual report 2007-08 rural library services*, (Visva-Bharati ;Sriniketan),2008
14. Tagore Rabindranath , *Siksha* , (Visva Bharati Granthan Vibhaga; Calcutta),1935, p.270.
15. Tagore Rabindranat , *Sikshar Svagikaran* ; in , *Siksha* , (Visva Bharati Granthan Vibhaga; Calcutta),1944 p.315.
16. *Visva Bharati Bulletin no.11* ,(Visva Bharati; Santiniketan), 1928, p.1.
17. Chakraborty Satyadas , *Sriniketanar gorar katha* , (Sahitya Samaj; Sriniketan),1985, p.51.
18. Sen Amartya ,*The Pratichi health report*, (TLM Books; Delhi), 2005, p. 2-5.