

Amenities in Rural Bengal: Distributional Pattern

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Abstract : The present article focuses on the importance of amenities in rural areas of West Bengal. A better quality of Life is highly determined by the access to such amenities which includes sanitation, drinking water, health facilities, banks and credit systems, power supply etc. The availability of such facilities in a village impacts health, education and economic life of a person. The Census of India, 2011 district level data has been used for the present study. It has tried to analyse the distributional pattern of rural amenities at district level. A suitable index has been used to combine several indicators and observe different zones of available amenities.

Keywords: Rural amenities, sanitation, drinking water, health facilities, banks and credit systems, power supply, distributional pattern.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rural India has uneven access to infrastructural facilities. The socio-economic development of any region is highly dependent on the access to basic amenities like drinking water, sanitation, education, health facilities etc. “There was an improvement in access to basic amenities in rural India during 2001–2011 as indicated by Census data. Kumar. A (2015) shows fall in percentages of deprived households—from 71.3% to 65% for drinking water, 78.1% to 69.3% for latrine facility, 56.5% to 44.7% for electricity and 96.09% to 94.2% for closed drainage connectivity for waste water outlet in the premise”. The availability of amenities is important for the development and a better quality of life in rural areas. Deller et al. (2001) has observed that different types of amenities can influence growth in population, employment and per capita income in subtle and unique ways.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The district level, Census of India 2011 data has been used for the present study. The District Census Handbook, Appendix-I has been used to conduct a district level study of West Bengal. The total number of 18 districts has been used for this study.

In this study 23 indicators (table 1.1) of amenities have been used to construct respective indexes and a composite amenities index to assess the distributional pattern of amenities at the district and block level.

Table 1.1 List of Indicators

Sl no	Category	Indicators (23)
1	Education	1. Primary, 2. Middle, 3. Senior Secondary school
2	Health	4. Primary health centre, 5. Primary health sub centre, 6. Maternity Child Welfare Centre, 7. Medical Practitioner with MBBS, 8. Medical Practitioner (with other degree), 9. Medical Shop
3	Communication	10. Post office, 11. Subpost office, Landlines, 12. Mobile phone coverage, 13. Internet cafes/ Common service centre
4	Transport	14. Village roads-pucca road, 15. Bus service (public/private), 16. Taxi & vans, 17. Tractors.
5	Banking	18. Commercial & co-operative banks, 19. Agricultural credit societies
6	Miscellaneous	20. Power, 21. Newspaper
7	Drinking water	22. Hand pump, 23. Tubewell

The following analysis has been conducted:

1. Composite index(weighted method): $\{(i_1 \times w_1) + (i_2 \times w_2) + (i_3 \times w_3)\} / (w_1 + w_2 + w_3)$

where i_1 = value of indicator 1, i_2 = value of indicator 2, i_3 = value of indicator 3

w_1 = value of weight 1, w_2 = value of weight 2, w_3 = value of weight 3

2. Correlation (Pearson's method).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The district level pattern of amenities distribution (table 1.3) in villages shows 10 districts of Puruliya, Paschim Medinipur, Dakshin Dinapur, Bankura, Darjiling, Maldah, Uttar Dinajpur, South 24 Parganas, Koch Bihar, Purba Medinipur, Birbhum have below average distribution to these amenities.

Table1.2 District wise rural amenities index of West Bengal, 2011

Composite amenities index (CAI)	Frequency	Percent
High (47.3 - 52.3)	5	27.8
Medium (42.3 - 47.3)	2	11.1
MEAN 42.3		
Low (37.3 - 42.3)	9	50.0
Very Low (32.3 - 37.3)	2	11.1
Total N	18	100

Source: Computed from various District Census Handbook, West Bengal, 2011

The rest 7 districts are observed to have villages with above average access to these amenities. The standard deviation is 5 which is low indicating lesser deviation from mean value 42.3. The lowest Composite amenities index is observed in Puruliya district and highest of 49.8 is found in Bardhaman district of West

Table1.3 Districtwise composite amenities index (CAI), 2011

district	edu- cation index	health index	drinking water index	comuni- cation index	trans- port index	banking index	miscell index	composite amenities index (cai)
Puruliya	37.9	9.2	47.9	30.3	29.6	4.3	77.8	33.9
Pas.Medinipur	26.5	6.9	64.9	32.3	22.8	6.1	82.9	34.6
D. Dinajpur	29.6	7.0	66.8	35.4	43.5	4.9	76.9	37.7
Bankura	35.5	8.3	64.5	34.8	33.6	5.9	84.2	38.1
Darjiling	42.1	12.7	43.4	39.9	42.4	7.7	81.3	38.5
Maldah	38.9	12.3	61.8	37.7	36.0	5.4	79.3	38.8
U. Dinajpur	37.5	11.5	71.1	37.8	40.2	4.7	77.5	40.0
S 24 Parganas	47.4	17.4	51.0	43.6	32.2	6.9	92.1	41.5
Koch Bihar	41.3	12.0	72.4	36.7	37.3	8.6	83.9	41.7
PurMedinipur	39.9	14.9	62.7	42.7	26.7	13.4	92.2	41.8
Birbhum	39.0	10.4	68.6	41.0	39.6	7.4	89.2	42.2
Haora	49.9	22.7	39.9	46.8	43.8	13.0	95.4	44.5
Murshidabad	46.1	14.6	70.9	43.3	39.9	11.0	87.5	44.8
Jalpaiguri	48.9	21.2	73.1	41.2	47.2	9.9	91.4	47.5
N24 Parganas	49.0	18.8	69.4	45.2	44.9	12.8	94.4	47.8
Hugli	41.3	17.7	72.7	48.4	45.2	15.0	97.9	48.3
Nadia	47.9	15.6	75.8	45.9	55.0	15.3	93.1	49.8
Barddhaman	43.4	16.4	72.0	49.5	57.4	14.6	95.5	49.8
mean	41.2	13.9	63.8	40.7	39.9	9.3	87.4	42.3
stdev	6.5	4.7	10.9	5.5	9.0	3.9	7.0	5.0

Source: Computed from various District Census Handbook, West Bengal, 2011

