



Infrastructure as a Determinant of Rural-Urban Educational Linkages: a case study in Berhampore block, Murshidabad, West Bengal

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Abstract

The main objectives of the paper are to find out the rural-urban educational linkages, their barriers and strategies to sustainable and balanced development. Accessibility and connectivity through the urban centre is the important determinant of this type of linkages. Being an urbanized Centre of the Berhampore Block, Berhampore Town is experiencing rural-urban linkage, which is usually provided by transport. The surrounded villages were selected based on distance from the main urban centre to emphasize the vital role played by infrastructure in shaping unique rural-urban continuum and sectorial diversification. The study shows educational variation among those villages which are away from the urban pivot and tries to find out the reasons about that type of picture. The educational linkage between the rural area and the urban centre is a most important aspect for changing the pace of rural development pattern. Remote and isolated locations provide the greatest challenges for improving the provision of education. The present paper aims to make an analysis of the rural-urban educational linkages and its comparison with infrastructural facility. The main intention of this paper is to elaborate the barriers to rural-urban educational linkages and strategies to improve the sustainable and balanced educational development of the selected rural areas. It ends with some recommendations on how the planner and decision maker can take these issues into consideration.

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Introduction

The rural milieu cannot be divorced from the urban system, which is embedded in it (Soja, 1969). The rural urban interaction is an indispensable phenomenon. The linkages between the rural areas and urban centres are complimentary in nature. The availability of roads and transport networks linking local settlements to a number of urban centres are the most important factor of rural urban linkages. Educational linkages are also a major theme in rural-urban interconnection. Equality, quality and quantity and their achievement in educational profile still remains a question mark. In recent decades it is being considered as nonnegotiable and necessary. As a backward district Murshidabad is also suffering from low standard of educational pattern in the rural areas. It is generally believed that as the country moves towards development, the education and other human development indicators also tend to move in a positive direction. The present study was undertaken with the aim in mind to identify the determinants and factors that can help in achieving a good educational facility all over

the rural areas of Berhampore block by proper infrastructural development and interactions with the urban centre.

Objectives

The major objectives are to know about the educational profile of the selected villages of Berhampore block and focus on the educational linkages between the rural areas and urban centre. The study also discusses the barriers of educational linkages and strategies to sustainable and balanced development in the educational scenario of Berhampore block. To elaborate the educational dependency on infrastructure that links rural and urban areas is also a vital objective of this paper.

Study Area

The geographical area of the Berhampore block lies between the 23°55'44"N to 24°10'52"N lat. and 88°08'38"E to 88°28'59"E longitudes, covering a total geographical area of 314.19sq.km, comprising 18GPS,

one municipality (fig-1). Here a major part of population lives in rural areas while only 6% people reside in main sadar town. Villages are selected as per distant from the main urban centre, which are of three types- i) Villages within 5km Banjetia (JL No.105), Haridasmati (JL No. 87) ii) Villages within 5 -15km Doulatabad (JL No.129) and Shimulia (JL No.71) iii) Village far away from 15km Chawrigachha (JL No. 38),

Materials and Methods

The study is mainly based on primary data. The present work was conducted on the basis of empirical observations and quantitative methods. Intensive field survey has been done by conducting door to door survey with the help of questionnaires and empirical observations of 30 families, randomly selected from each sampled villages and through questionnaires the primary data about the educational linkages has been collected. Statistical techniques have also been used. After the completion of field work, the collected data has been processed and presented with suitable diagrams. To achieve the objectives mentioned above, the relevant method of quantitative analysis has been employed. To examine the relationship between distance (X) and percentage of students going to Berhampore (Y) calculated based on Regression Analysis. The required equation is $Y_c = a + bX$, Where X means distance of villages from Berhampore and Y means percentage of students going to Berhampore.

Educational centres of Berhampore town

Berhampore, the head quarter of the Murshidabad district, has been an urbanised area from the earliest evidence of history. The vast rural areas of Berhampore block are mainly linked with the Berhampore town as means of occupation, health, education etc. The rural-urban education linkage is one of the most important linkages. The improved and fascinating educational profile of Berhampore town is pulling the rural residents towards the only urban centre of the Berhampore block. (Table-1)

The major centres of higher studies are Murshidabad College of engineering and technology, Govt. college of Engineering and Textile Technology, Murshidabad Medical College, Murshidabad Institute of Technology, Union Christian Training College (B.Ed.), Central Sericulture Research and Training Institute.etc

Educational Profile of the sampled Rural Areas

The rural areas of Berhampore block show a versatile educational profile (table-2 and 3). According to the study area the nearest villages (fig-2) like Banjetia and Haridasmati are both enjoying good linkage facilities. Due to the proximity of the urban area the educational linkage is better. Banjetia has two non-govt. schools and a B.Ed. College. The English medium schools of this village are pulling the urban people towards the rural area. Both of the villages are well-connected by

road. Simulia is situated at the south-eastern part of Berhampore block. The communicational difficulties are the main drawback of the village. Though the distance between Berhampore and Simulia is not so far, but due to weak connectivity the educational dependency on urban area is also weaker. Simulia has both the religious people Hindu (50%) and Muslim (50%). Most of the inhabitants of this village send their children to the high schools of Nowda and Lalnagar. It is also an economically backward village. The distance between Berhampore and Doulatabad is almost 15kms. Good communicational facility enhanced the educational linkages of the village. By Islampore Road, the village is well connected with Berhampore.

The educational profile of the Chawrigacha village is showing an exceptional picture. The distance between Berhampore town and Chawrigacha is highest, but due to better infrastructural facility almost 50% children are going to Berhampore for higher studies. By road the Ramnagar-Bazarshou-Chawrigacha is better. The nearest urban centre of the village is Beldanga, But the linkage is difficult. Ferry service is the only way to go there. So, most of the inhabitants have selected Berhampore for higher studies. Some of them are going to Satui High School

Infrastructure as a Determinant of Educational Linkage

Berhampore town is the only urban centre of Berhampore block. In the educational scenario the urban centre is attracting the rural inhabitants from different parts of the block. So, good communication and transportation plays a crucial role in educational setup. Berhampore is mainly linked with the rural areas by road network (N.H 34), rail (Lalgola- Sealdah & Howrah-Azimganj). The rural areas which are situated almost beside the road network have good linkages with the urban centre. But the villages far away from the communication network are suffering from low level of educational linkages. Where good Communication is present, there distance is not a barrier to proper connection. (Table - 4 & Fig-2).

The regression results (Table - 4) imply a significant negative relationship ($r^2=0.048$) between the two variables. The rural areas like Banjetia, Haridasmati, Doulatabad and chowrigacha are experiencing a good connection to the urban centre. But the weak linkage between Simulia and Berhampore gives us an idea about weak infrastructure and lower standard of development.

Barriers to Educational Linkages

The most basic purpose of human development is to ensure that people lead long and healthy lives, become knowledgeable, have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living, and are able to participate in the life of the community. Without these, many choices are simply not available, and many

opportunities in life remain inaccessible (UNDP-2001:9). The main barriers to the educational linkages are as follows:

- I. Many rural children of the village Simulia and Chawrigacha are not interested to walk long distances for education or pay for transportation and to lose valuable time in walking that could otherwise be spent helping at home.
- II. Some families are unwilling to send them down long roads alone.
- III. The rural children are required to supply labour on the farm and in the home. Some of the engaged in masonry works and *biri* making. Villagers of Simulia mainly engage their children in agricultural fields after the basic education in their village.
- IV. Some of the families see little immediate value in their children sitting behind the desks for which there is no use in the villages.
- V. Even where a primary school is accessible there may be no secondary school within commuting distance. The villagers nearer to the Berhampore town migrate daily for higher education but the educational linkages of the remote villages are not so strong.
- VI. The dropout rates are high in many low income families and some specific religion groups.

Strategies and Concluding Remarks

Education for human resource development is understood to be a learning process of acquiring complete mastery of one's destiny. From such a point of view developing human resources for successful rural transition is an important factor. Education plays a critical role in the process of economic development. Therefore better educational linkage between rural areas and urban centres is the main determinant of the educational development in the rural areas. Good connectivity may reduce relative distances. A major road linked with main urban centre helps to develop the educational status of the rural areas. Due to family negligence, proper education is not obtained in the study area, so awareness of people is another important requirement to enhance the educational status. Good road network or connectivity is also needed to fulfil the next goal of education by applying varied schemes by the government. Education is the most powerful weapon by which a balanced regional development can be achieved. In some of the villages of this block the villagers attend the primary school as first stepping stone and then they are not interested to send their children to the urban centres for better and higher education. "Flexible regional policies will lead to global urbanization and modified understanding of urbanization beyond the geographic boundaries will mitigate the gap between rural-urban linkage" (Tacoli 1998).

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Table - 1: The Educational Profile of Berhampore Municipality

Educational Centres	Numbers
Primary Schools	58
Junior High and High Schools	8
H.S. Schools	11
Colleges (General Degree)	3

Source: DISE 2014 & Field Survey.

Table – 2: Educational Status of the Respondents (%)

Village	Primary	Secondary	H.S	Graduate	Others
Banjetia	25	35	15	18	7
Haridasmati	27	40	12	16	5
Simulia	46	34	10	9	1
Doulatabad	32	17	38	10	3
chawrigacha	23	35	22	16	4

(Source: Field Survey)

Table – 3: Institutional Profile

Villages	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	H.S Schools	Others
Banjetia	3	-	(Non Govt.) 2	(SSK, MSK)
Haridasmati	3	-	1	-
Simulia	1	-	-	-
Doulatabad	2	1 (Girls)	-	-
Chawrigacha	1	1	-	2

Source: Field Survey

Table – 4: Relationship between Distance and % of Students going to the Urban Centre

Village Name	Distance from Berhampore in km (x)	Students going to Berhampore (%: Y)	Y _c
Banjetia	3	70	54.70
Haridasmati	4	65	54.17
Simulia	10	10	50.96
Doulatabad	15	55	48.28
Chawrigacha	27	50	41.86

Source- Field Survey Manipulation

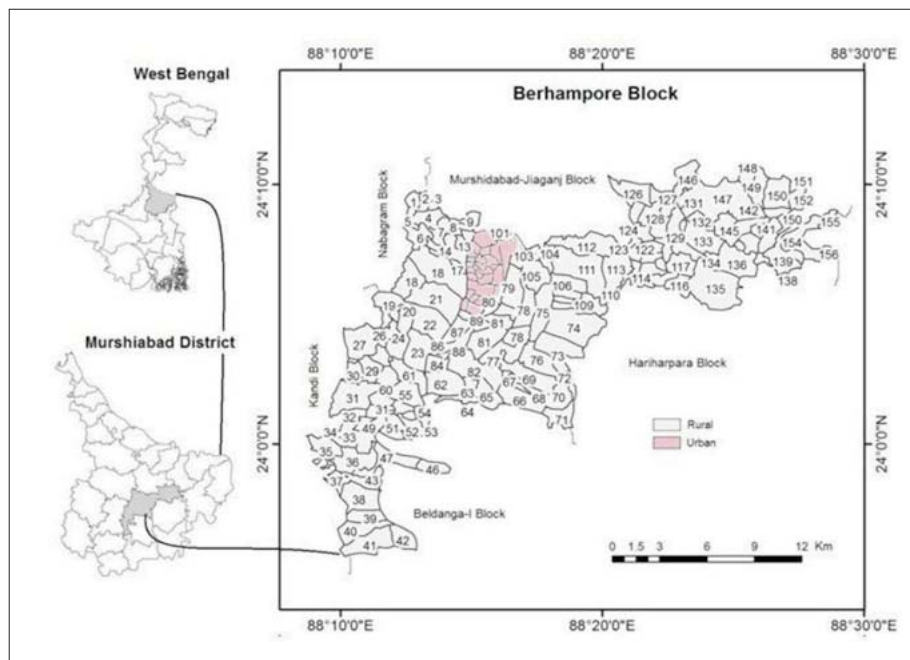


Fig. 1: Location of the Study Area

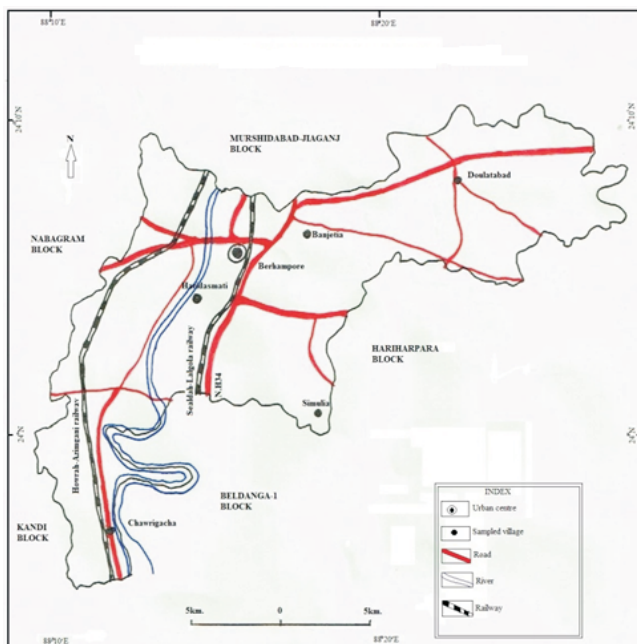


Fig. 2: Transport Network of the Study Area

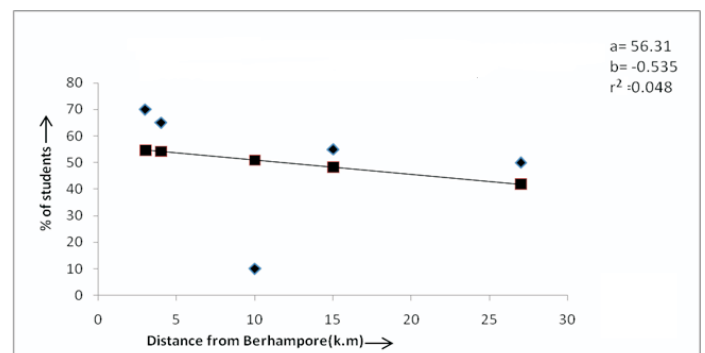


Fig. 3: Relation between Distance from Behrampur and Student Inflow



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