

URBAN AMENITIES: A CASE STUDY OF ARA CITY, BIHAR

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ABSTRACT

The urban amenities play a crucial role in providing a sense of livability for residents. Urban amenities service refers to a group of activity which are essential to the efficient performance of the key operation of an urban centre. Urban amenities includes public health system, robust education system, affordable housing for All, water supply, electric supply, sanitation, garbage management etc. The current study investigates the relationship between different socio economics status and demographic character of selected household and availabilities of urban amenities. In addition to it, the present study aims to examine the availabilities of basic amenities in term of their progress and quality in the selected wards of Ara city as well as to interpret critically the role of Ara municipal corporation, local bodies and administration. Ara is the administrative headquarter of Bhojpur District and as well as only class-I town in the district. Ara is well connected with the other part of county by road and rail. It is located at the distance of 60 km of by road from Patna. Ara is situated at $25^{\circ}33'27''$ north latitude and $84^{\circ}40'12''$ east longitude. The population and the wards of Ara city are respectively 261430 (as per Census 2011) and 45. The present study is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data have to be collected through city survey from ward to ward whereas secondary data is being taken from government offices such as National Family and Health Survey (NFHS) and National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) etc.

Key words: urban , infrastructure, Availability, services etc.

1 INTRODUCTION

Urban amenities or public utility services in urban area refers to all goods, services and institutional set up that makes human life more comfortable. These are central to the urban society without which urban society cannot emerge and sustain. The concept of urban amenities is ambiguous and different scholars have defined urban amenities differently. For **Rick Geddes (1999)**, a professor of economics in Fordham University "Public utilities (i.e. urban amenity) include a wide range of industries, such as electricity, water, telecommunication, cable television, rail, roads." On the other hand for behavioral and humanistic geographers like **Glaser** and **Putnam (2000)** urban amenities means the thing that people appreciate about their urban environment. These are the qualities and attributes people value about a place that contributes to the experience of a high "Quality of Life". According to urban development and Housing Department, Government of Bihar "Urban Amenities include all the supportive activities to the resident population as per the prevailing norms such as roads, streets, open spaces, water and electric supply, street lighting, sewerage, drainage, nursery, churches, all kind of schools, all category of clinics and hospitals, community hall, library, convenience shopping, playfields, parks and play grounds, green areas, police station, parking, bus station, fire station, post office, essential Economical Weaker Section (EWS) Housing for the population, area for informal sector, all the components necessary to facilitate barrier

free accessibility for the senior citizens and physically challenged persons and other utilities, services and conveniences as may be delineated by the government". Urban amenities can be considered as public goods and services for collective consumption (Castells, 1977). Urban amenities means, the facilities provided to urban population for a good, comfortable and healthy life. It may be site specific (natural) such as lake, river, and green space or it may be created such as social and administrative institutions, facility of water supply, transportation, electricity, health center, recreation, play ground, parks, sewage and sanitation, and Safety.

2 STUDY AREA

Ara is the administrative headquarter of Bhojpur District and as well as only class-I town in the district. Ara is well connected with the other part of county by road and rail. It is located at the distance of 60 km of by road from Patna. Ara is situated at $25^{\circ}33'27''$ north latitude and $84^{\circ}40'12''$ east longitude. Ara is governed by Ara Municipal Corporation. **The proposed research works are confined to only Ara Municipal Corporation (AMC).** The literacy rate of Ara as per 2011 census is 81.2%. The population density of the city is about 6567 person per square km. The average sex ratio of the city is 883 female per thousand male. The population of Ara city is nearly 261430 as per census 2011, of which male and females population are 138804 and 122626. The city is experiencing a high growth rate at attribute to migration from surroundings villages largely because of education, medical facilities, trade and commerce etc. The area of Ara city is 49 Sq.Km. Nearly half of the area used for residential purpose and rest for commercial, Transport, public utilities ,administrative works, recreation, parks and open space. The city is divided into 45 wards spread over mohalla . The total families residing at Ara city as per AMC data is 39274. Topographically, the city represents the shallow plain land appearance with the river Ganga in the northern part. The city gets rain from summer monsoon which is erratic and scanty ranging from 95 to 115 cm per year. The city experiences tropical monsoon of climate. Temperature during summer season is very high and sometimes reaches upto 46°C , in winter season falls at 4°C .

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

1. To study the relationship between different socio economic status and demographic characteristics of the house hold and availability of urban amenities and services.
2. To analyze the status of physical and social infrastructure and to examine the availabilities the basic amenities in term of their progress and quality in the selected wards of Ara city.

4 DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The present study works is based on primary and secondary source of data. Primary data have been generated through a comprehensive field survey to identify the wards from where household belongs to different income groups and also detailed survey of sampled household. Questionnaire interview with the male and female respondents has to be collected from sampled wards. For the purpose of maps of study area municipal ward map, survey of India thematic maps and remote sensing data from internet has been collected. Remotely sensed data has been used to formulate maps of study area showing

different attributes of the study area. The data collected from different sources has been analyzed and levels of urban amenities have been assigned on the basis of some selective parameters.

5 MAIN DISCUSSION.

5.1 EDUCATION SCENERIO

Education is the process of facilitating learning. Knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits of a group of people are transferred to other people, through storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, or research. Educational facilities are the crucial strategic factor in the development process. Provision of good schools and colleges are very much needed for proper development, so educational development is an important indicator for development.

Education is the basis for developing and empowering children with knowledge and skills, which facilitate their access to productive employment. The education system has several challenges like the changing dynamics of the population, requirement of quality education, affordable vocational trainings, access to higher education, innovation and research. Keeping in view these challenges, various educational programmes are being implemented by the State Government, some of them with collaborations from the Central Government. To enhance the quality of technical education, institutes like Indian Institute of Technology and Indian Institute of Management have been established.

The education system of India is divided into three main layers — Elementary, Secondary and Higher Education. The Elementary education ranges from Grades I-VIII and children in the age group of 6-14 are a part of it and are entitled to free and compulsory education, as mandated by the Right to Education (RTE) Act (2010). The elementary level is further divided into 2 subcategories — Primary (Grades I-V) and Upper Primary (Grades VI-VIII). A child undergoes Secondary education for four years (Grades IX-XII), split into Secondary (Grades IX-X) and Higher Secondary (Grades XI-XII). The Higher Education is the last stage which is divided into two streams — the academic stream and the vocational stream. The academic stream is envisioned 380 to prepare students for further study at a university or other higher educational institution, while the vocational stream prepares students for work or further vocational education. This section presents the status of education in Bihar, in terms of literacy rate, enrolment ratio, dropout rate, number of schools and teachers, expenditure on education, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, SarvaShikshaAbhiyan and a few other related activities.

5.2 WATER SUPPLY SCENERIO

A regular access to safe drinking water and sanitation is critical for healthy living. The State Government is solely responsible for provision of clean drinking water and sanitation to improve the health status of a population. As per National Statistical Office (NSO) Report on Drinking Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Housing condition in India (76th Round, July-December, 2018), it was revealed that the major source of drinking water of the households in Bihar was handpump in the rural areas and tube-wells and handpumps in the urban areas. About 94.3 percent of the households in the rural areas

used handpumps and about 75.8 percent of the households in the urban areas used handpumps or tube-wells as the principal source of drinking water.

Water supply in the town is entirely ground water based. Ground water is extracted through 15 high yielding bore-wells that supply around 9 MLD of water or 35.43 lpcd as per 2010 projected population. The existing storage capacity of 2.95 ML is not adequate to support the present population of the town. Arrah has eight over head tanks (OHT) into which water is directly pumped. From here, the water gets distributed to parts of the town through a network that was laid in 1954. The pipeline network covers only 8,410 households or 24% of the town. The Municipal Corporation and Public health and engineering department (PHED) have provided around 185 public stand posts and 922 hand-pumps.

5.3 SEWERAGE AND SENTATION LEVEL

Sanitation facility is one of the most important requirements for the healthy and clean environment. The sewerage and drainage are the flush lines for the removal of non-solid refuse. The effluent from different parts of the city is carried and removed through the drains. Safe drinking water and good sanitation are important measures for improvement in environment and quality of life of people in the cities. Sanitation does not mean only to clean sewages but to protect those sources of water which support the sustainable development.

Arrah does not have an organised sewerage system leading to improper discharge of effluents from septic tanks and sullage into storm water drains and ultimately into the river. The town has nine major drainage outfalls that serve as a conduit for discharge of the domestic wastewater, sewerage and surface runoff into the Ganga River. The infiltration of rainwater into the sewerage lines and absence of segregated sewerage and storm water drains causes problems that are aggravated in the monsoons. The municipal corporation has no reliable updated database on number of properties having toilets and information on their connectivity to the disposal system. Estimates available from surveys conducted under the Integrated Low Cost Sanitation (ILCS) project show a very high rate of open defecation – estimated at 66%.

5.4 MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT LEVEL

Solid wastes are now classified in different ways. On the basis of sources of origin it is classified into industrial, hospital and Municipal Solid Waste (MSW). It is also classified into hazardous and non-hazardous categories on the basis of the toxicity of materials in the waste. Municipal solid waste can be generally defined as wastes generated by residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, construction, demolition, process and municipal services. But this definition is not strictly followed by studies and in most of the studies wastes generated by industrial, construction and demolition and municipal services are excluded.

Arrah town generates an average of 102 tonnes of solid waste daily at the rate of 400 grams per capita per day. Currently there is no door to door collection of primary waste. The predominant mode of primary collection is by way of street sweeping. In absence of the systems of storage of waste at source and on account of indiscriminate disposal of waste on the streets, drains, etc. the streets remain dirty all the time and drains get

clogged necessitating multiple handling of waste. Transportation is not scientifically designed. AMC is not in a position to transport the entire quantity of waste generated in the city on a day to day basis on account of inadequacy of fleet of vehicles and inappropriate management for transportation of waste. The collection efficiency of solid waste is only 59% and there is no scientific disposal of solid waste.

5.5 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

River Ganga in the North and Arrah Canal in the East of the town majorly regulates the form of road network in the Arrah municipal area. The railway line (Delhi-Howrah Railway line) that passes through the town in an east-west direction has also influenced the circulation pattern of the town. These have led to linear developments. Arrah town lacks organised parking spaces and the road width is further decreased with unorganised parking on the roadside. Lack of public transport system forces the citizens to depend on private vehicles that thus increase traffic.

Roads-NH 30(Mohania-Ara-Patna-Bakhtiarpur) and NH 84(Ara-Buxar) are important roads through Ara Town. State Highway 12 connects Ara from Sasaram. There are two bus stop in Ara town one for public buses(Bihar tourism) near railway station and other for private.

Railways- Arrah Junction railway station, (Station code: ARA), is a railway station serving the city of Arrah in the Bhojpur district in the Indian state of Bihar. The Arrah Junction railway station is well connected to most of the major cities in India by the railway network, which lies in between Howrah-Delhi main line which serves it with numerous numbers of trains. Arrah is well connected Patna, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Ajmer, Kanpur, Pune, Guwahati, Surat and other cities. There are only three trains that originate from Ara railway station. The major facilities available are Waiting rooms, retiring room, computerized reservation facility, Reservation Counter, Vehicle parking etc. The vehicles are allowed to enter the station premises. There are refreshment rooms - vegetarian and non vegetarian, tea stall, book stall, post and telegraphic office and Government Railway police (G.R.P) office.

5.6 ENVIRONMENTS

Environment provides the resources to satisfy the basic needs of human life. Apart from this it plays an important role in the ethical, religious, social and cultural values of societies. Palmer (1998) adds political, economic, technological, moral, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects to the environment. Human beings are dependent for their living, health, and enjoyment of life on the basic biological systems. Ecosystems provide many services to mankind such as recreation, tourism, etc.

Arrah is experiencing environmental challenges due to lack of infrastructure and services. The town is developing in an uncontrolled manner that is adversely impacting the environment. There are no specific initiatives to check various environmental aspects. It should be noted that there is no district level office of the state Pollution Control Board in Bhojpur District. There are 72 water bodies (ponds/tanks) and very few small gardens at various locations in the AMC area. Some of the ponds are encroached by slum dwellers like John Dean Pond and the pond near JawaharTola. Environment of Ara is now degraded. This is due to urban sprawl, population increase, various types of pollution and flood.

5.7 HOUSING

Housing is an expression of social culture, its level of technology, living and development. The average size of housing in terms of built up area shows negative relation with the size of family and city. However, the shortage of houses increases with the city size and so is the diversity in terms of house types. Owning a house especially in urban India is one of the major aims of urban middle class. Though the urban areas have the dominance of industrial, commercial, administrative and services activities, the residential function is by far the largest claimant in urban land use. This is mainly because of changing family structure i.e. from large joint families to smaller unitary families and also due to a trend of living independently in self-contained independent apartments with economic and social decontrols.

The recent survey undertaken under the ongoing SPUR project in 2008 has identified a total of 26 slum areas in AMC. The estimated population in these slum areas is around 22,736 which is approximately 9% projected population for the year 2010. Total no. of Slums in Ara city numbers 3,300 in which population of 21,243 resides. This is around 8.13% of total population of Arrah city.

6 CONCLUSION

Urban amenities are all the physical infrastructure (road, railway, Housing, Drains etc.) social and cultural facilities (park, playground, cinemahall, hospitals, school and colleges, old age home, orphanage etc.), financial institutions (Bank, insurance company etc) and other facilities provided by the government and non-government agencies. Some geographers consider site and situation, beautiful scenic view, pleasant physical setting an amenity like physical and socio-cultural facilities and infrastructure. So, urban amenities are site specific natural and manmade services and facilities (whether tangible or intangible) that make any town livable, fetch population from hinterland (immigrants), promote tourism and supports overall growth of town in terms of quality of life of urbanites and quantity of the population spend their day in the town. So, urban amenities are measure of the prosperity of population residing in the town.

It is clear that there is a serious shortage of basic amenities in Arrah city. Of the three basic amenities taken into consideration for the present study, the problem of piped water is found to be more serious in the city' and is followed by sanitation services. The access

to electricity alone is not a problem, but massive power cuts and low voltage makes this problem even more alarming. The residents of the colonies located in the outer part of the city are forced to live in a pathetic situation in terms the availability' of these basic amenities viz. safe drinking water, sanitation and electricity. The situation in particularly Slum pockets is more deplorable, which reported the lowest level of these amenities. On the whole, while piped water supply seems to be the main concern of people in the colonies located in the central part of the city, poor sanitation services occupy the attention of people living in the colonies located in outer parts.

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