

**Rural Service Centres in Purnia District: A Study**

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**Abstract**

Rural service centres are directly related to business activities which fulfills the demand between the consumer and sale and purchase. These centres of sale and purchase are, in fact, considered to be an index of the standard of living. A view of the functional importance of every service centre it can be said that they really show the usefulness of place, form and time. The distribution of central places in India seems to be quite complex depending upon terrain Characteristics, resource utilization, population distribution, transport development and purchasing power of the consumers. The core region may be characterized by specialized functions and high intra-regional accessibility while the peripheral region by central place functions and low to medium transport development. Rural service centres are not of a single type, structure or size. Our human supports systems are based on the flow of information, goods and services, and cooperation among people who are located at convenient places relative to one another.

**Key Words:** Rural Services Centre, Business Activity, Central Place, Utilization, Population

Rural service centres are directly related to business activities which fulfills the demand between the consumer and sale and purchase. These centres of sale and purchase are, in fact, considered to be an index of the standard of living. A view of the functional importance of every service centre it can be said that they really show the usefulness of place, form and time. Generally rural service centres too depend on the demand on rural peoples. All such market service centres grow on the demand and services of the villages. We can also call them Central Business District too, because most of the requirements of the rural people are obtained at these temporary service centres. They have completion like the CBD and this completion depends.

Much of the work leading to central place theory in India is concerned with the identification of hierarchies of settlements

as central places and a few on location and character of periodic markets and spatial recognition of rural service centres. The distribution of central places in India seems to be quite complex depending upon terrain Characteristics, resource utilization, population distribution, transport development and purchasing power of the consumers. Depending upon these factors Indian space economy is characterized by metropolitan apex with the four multi-million cities Mumbai, Kolkata, New Delhi and Chennai, standing as Islands of urban potentials. Areas about 150 Km. around these metropolitan centres are turned as core region and away from them as peripheral region. The core region may be characterized by specialized functions and high intra-regional accessibility while the peripheral region by central place functions and low to medium transport development. Consequently, the hierarchic order gets disturbed with diversification in

resource use. Change in the level of production and transport technology, increasing incomes and changing consumer and producer travel pattern. In other words it can be stated that Christaller hierarchy principle may be related to the regions stage of development creating dichotomous functional and spatial gaps. The marketing principle may be found operating in the peripheral region with subsistence economics, limited development potential and with intra-regional transport inaccessibility, while traffic principle in the core-region with commercialized agriculture, industrial development and with the transport accessibility. Keeping these in mind a few related works on central place hierarchy are reviewed on core and peripheral regions respectively in the succeeding section.

Rural service centres are not of a single type, structure or size. Our human support systems are based on the flow of information, goods and services, and cooperation among people who are located at convenient places relative to one another. Unless individuals can produce all that they need themselves, and relatively few can, they must depend on shipments of food and supplies to their home place or convenient outlet centres. Non-subsistence groups establish stores, places of worship, repair centres, and production sites as close to their home places as is possible and reasonable. The result is the establishment of rural service centres or finally towns.

Rural service centres are functionally connected to other cities and rural areas. In fact, the reason for the existence of rural urban centres is not only to provide services for itself, but for others outside of

it. The rural service centre is a consumer of food, a processor of materials, and an accumulator and dispenser of goods and services, but it must rely on outside areas for its supplies and as a market for its activities. In order to adequately perform the tasks the support it and to add new functions as demanded by the larger economy, the rural service centre must be efficiently located. That efficiency may be marked by centrality to the area served. It may derive from the physical characteristics of its site, or placement may be related to the resources, producing regions, and transportation network of the country, so that the effective performance of a wide array of activities is possible.

Evolution and development of rural service centres are directly related to their site and situation. Site is the exact location of the settlement and can be described either in terms of latitude and longitude, or in terms of the physical characteristics of the site. If site suggests absolute location, situation indicates relative location. The relative location places a settlement in relation to physical and human characteristics of the surrounding areas. Very often it is important to know what kinds of possibilities and activities exist in the area near a settlement, such as the distribution of raw materials, market areas.

Rural service centres have assumed new significance in geographical studies. The functional exchange interdependence and co-ordination of various areal units are organized through system of service nodes which 'act as a bridging link between urban areas and the country-side and may be urban, urban or rural in character. Particularly the rural service centres which function at a lower level of centres which function at the lower level of central place

hierarchy and are also a part and parcel of the rural functional system may act as possible growth points in prorogating in new innovations and implementing development policies and programmes for rural upliftment. In the opinion of R.N. Thakur Rural service centres are distinctive villages and provide education, medical, postal, commercial or other facilities which attract people from the surrounding villages. Har Har Singh defined "Rural Central place is that which discharges its services, not only to local population but also to the inhabitants of its region. They can be easily differentiated on the basis of some of their additional.

According to Om Prakash Singh service centres as central places are as permanent human establishment, where an exchange of goods, services and necessities, socio-economic in nature for population other than the local one exists and which therefore commands as its region, the immediate contiguous encircling area, in the respect of its importance and active role in rural development and spatial planning R.L. Singh and Rana P.B. Singh have concluded that in spatial planning, service centres are considered as the base as they are the centre of diffusion and change in spatial context. With their relatively high intensity of functional magnitude and distinctiveness they provide different type of facilities and amenities to the surrounding region.

At the same time various things produced in the villages are brought for sale shows the country and town relationships. These weekly markets are, thus, a symbol of the variousness a rural-urban continuum. Raw material from the rural areas and manufactured articles from urban areas is brought to these markets for sale. On this

basis urban-rural difference has been considered a scale. This is why Bertrand pointed out those who propound the theory of rural-urban continuum feel that this relative difference between the village and city is of some degrees only and is involved in the final limits of each other. Rural factors are found in every city and urban factors in every village. In fact, city and village are two ends of the same spectrum. Naglas, Purvas, temporary and permanent villages, towns, cities and large cities are like the various colours of a spectrum.

In this age of environmental degradation and ecological imbalance protection of environment and improvement in living standard are interlinked. So far as standards for physical environment are concerned effort should be made for resource conservation as well as their reutilization. The practical objectives of socio-economic standards should be welfare of all groups of people. Special attention should be given to needs, economic activities and social programmes for economically weaker sections of the rural society. Tradition of different social groups, their value systems, and social should be taken care of along with social security and minimum interference in an individual's life will formulating measures to improve living standard of people. Improvement of human settlements is a continuous process and hence co-operation of local population, their selected representatives and community organization is essential in implementing the standards.

Study area, Purnia district is an economically backward district. It is very difficult to set the standard for economically backward and socially

complex rural areas. For this purpose a thorough analysis of the study area is needed. Another does not intend, in this chapter, to formulate some new standard of this own to improve the rural and urban settlements, however on the basis of existing resources and limitations some guidelines have been suggested. Keeping the view in mind, the requirement of threshold population for various and functions as well as the hierarchical status of a particular rural service centre, development programmes and infrastructure facility have been outlined in accordance with Urban function in Rural Development approach guide the morphological structure of rural service centres in any specific area.

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#### **Conclusion:**

In fact, service centres are considered as a concept, developed in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century. European geographers preferred to analysis which service centres starting from foci-centres and growth like cosmopolitan or the industrial complexes. Here the foci gradually developed into the growth poles. This idea was very much developed and was in the fore front of the research issues by the economists and regional planners such as Boudvilley. Christaller, Perroux and W. Isard. But now a day, this idea is gradually phased out and the settlement hierarchy becomes important village to small town, middle town to larger town, cities to metropolitan cities.