

# Status of Health-care Services in Balurghat Municipal Area of Dakshin Dinajpur District, West Bengal

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## ARTICLE DETAILS

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## ABSTRACT

Indian economy has been one of the fastest growing economies in the world for some time, side by side aspirations and standards of living are rising. Therefore, the current state of urban service delivery is simply unacceptable. Floods and water-logging, traffic jams, pollution, accumulated waste at roadsides, poor health services and people queuing up for drinking water from street stand posts and tankers across cities and towns—all these distressed scenarios drive home the urgent need to address the challenges of delivering urban services in India. In Balurghat town, the status of health-care services was not satisfactory even only few years back. Both the government and private sectors were lacking in this field. Patients were frequently referred to the outside medical colleges. Though now the situations are slightly changed especially after the upgradation of Balurghat District Hospital to a Super Speciality Hospital by the Government of West Bengal few years ago. Still the health-care system of the town is lacking far behind from the satisfactory mark. Hence, proper attention should be taken both by the public and private sectors to invest in this much need basic service for the common people of the town and its hinterland.

## 1. Introduction

Health-care is probably the most neglected and deficient sector in Balurghat town. The only major hope for the citizen is the District Hospital which is located at ward no. 15 of Balurghat Municipality. About 25-30 years back, it was one of the renowned medical institutions in North Bengal but presently lost its past glory. On the one hand, now it is suffering from the shortage of good doctors, staffs, modern techno-based machineries and instruments, modern facilities of treatment; on the other hand the current infrastructure is very inadequate to serve the huge population of the town. As it has the status of District Hospital, therefore, it has to serve also the people of the entire Dakshin Dinajpur District. Another important fact is that sometimes the doctors don't want to come into this town even after their order of transfer due to its pocket location. Again if they are compelled to join, don't stay for a long time. Though, very recently it got the status of Super Speciality Hospital.

## 2. Data base and methodology

The data base of the present study was carried out both on primary and secondary levels. Data and information had been gathered by consultation of several books, journals, magazines, records, reports etc. So many visits were made with the municipal and hospital officials for data and information regarding this matter. The collected data have been analyzed, tabulated, interpreted and finally presented by various cartographic techniques.

## 3. Previous scenario of Balurghat District Hospital

### Availability of services in District Hospital

The status regarding the availability of doctors in the hospital can be easily understood from figure 1 and table 1. As a result, the total health-care system received a blow and the patients are frequently referred to better institutions only on some insignificant grounds. It has only 320 beds which are too

inadequate for the present population of the town, representing one bed for every 473 of the town population.

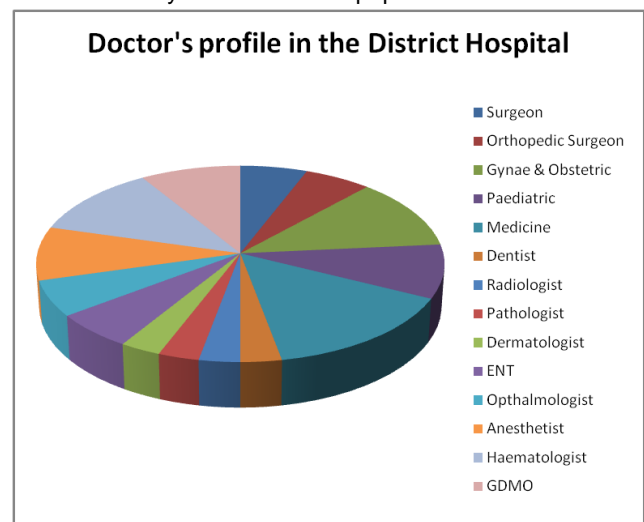


Figure 1 Category of doctors in District Hospital, Balurghat Town 2014.

Table 1 Number of doctors in District Hospital, Balurghat Town (2014).

Category of doctor	No. of doctor
Surgeon	02
Orthopedic surgeon	02
Gynea & obstetrics	04
Pediatrics	03
Medicine	05
Dental	01
Radiologist	01
Pathologist	01
Dermatologist	01
ENT	02
Ophthalmologist	02
Anesthetist	03
Blood bank	04
GDMO	03
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>

Source: District Hospital, Balurghat, Dakshin Dinajpur.

4. Category of beds in district hospital

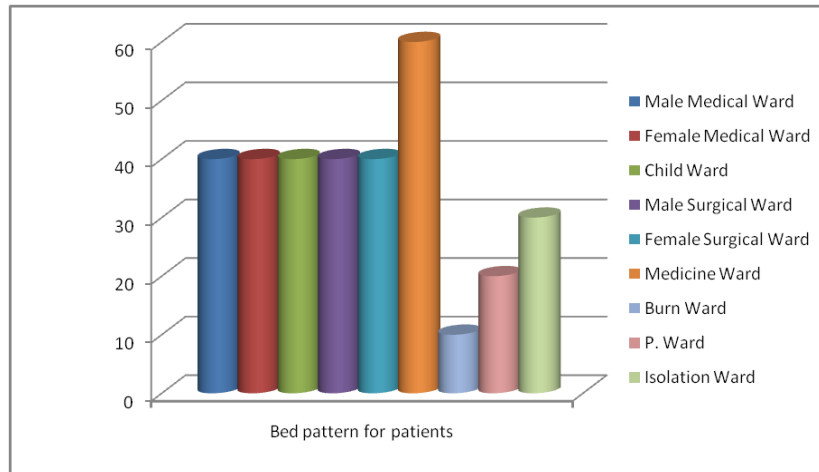


Figure 2 Bed pattern in different wards of District Hospital, Balurghat Town.

There are altogether 320 beds distributed in the nine wards—40 each in M.M.W, F.M.W, C.W, M.S.W, F.S.W; 60 in M.W; 10 in B.W; 20 in P.W and 30 in I.W. (figure 2). In the year 2010, the hospital received Rs. 525394 from Charge Collection and Rs. 186382 from OPD tickets (figure 3) respectively. This is noticed in 2010 that the average monthly number and category of patients came to the different wards of the District Hospital are 5840 (General/OPD), 639 (Medical), 471 (Surgical), 319 (Gynaecology & Obstetrics), 103 (Orthopedic), 890 (Eye), 735 (ENT), 1082 (Pediatric), 368 (Chest), 769 (Sexually Transmitted Disease), 160 (Psychiatry), 752 (Dental), 350 (Homeopathy), 16 (Acupuncture) and 211 (Ayurveda).

Several surgical facilities, family planning units, USG, X-ray & ECG units, immunization and vaccination etc. are provided by the District Hospital. Recently a SNCU is also opened up. In spite of these, the hospital is lack of any CCU, ICCU or C.T. Scan facility which is very essential for the serious patients in a terminal place like Balurghat. In most serious surgical and injury cases, the patient parties are compelled to take their patients to the nearest Malda town or Kolkata or outside of West Bengal due to such deficiencies. Another problem is that the blood bank of the District Hospital is suffering from the shortage of blood during most of the year.

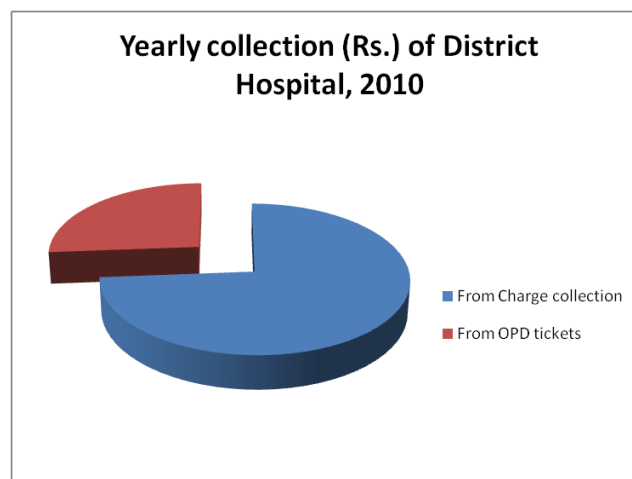


Figure 3 Earning sources of District Hospital, Balurghat.

Table 2 Monthly performance of District Hospital in Balurghat Town (2014).

Month	Admission	Discharge	Death	Ref. in	Ref. out	DORB	Abs.	Maternal death	Neonatal death	Bed occupying rate
Jan	2014	1728	123	180	147	147	15	02	06	60
Feb	2145	1932	89	149	126	183	19	00	01	74
Mar	2643	2372	97	180	144	180	18	00	08	78
Apr	2559	2266	87	170	140	184	18	00	08	75
May	2910	2562	85	176	144	218	23	01	08	79
Jun	2491	2283	73	152	151	175	24	00	04	76
Jul	2868	2493	97	169	161	220	26	03	09	78

Aug	3196	2794	103	201	193	211	24	03	09	87
Sep	3213	2982	79	209	176	208	25	01	10	90
Oct	2963	2710	85	193	181	221	30	00	07	78
Nov	2429	2250	104	181	148	174	15	01	13	72
Dec	2299	2010	96	167	173	155	15	00	15	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>31730</b>	<b>28382</b>	<b>1118</b>	<b>2127</b>	<b>1884</b>	<b>2276</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>Avg. 76</b>

Source: District Hospital, Balurghat, Dakshin Dinajpur.

5. Month-wise records of patients (2014)

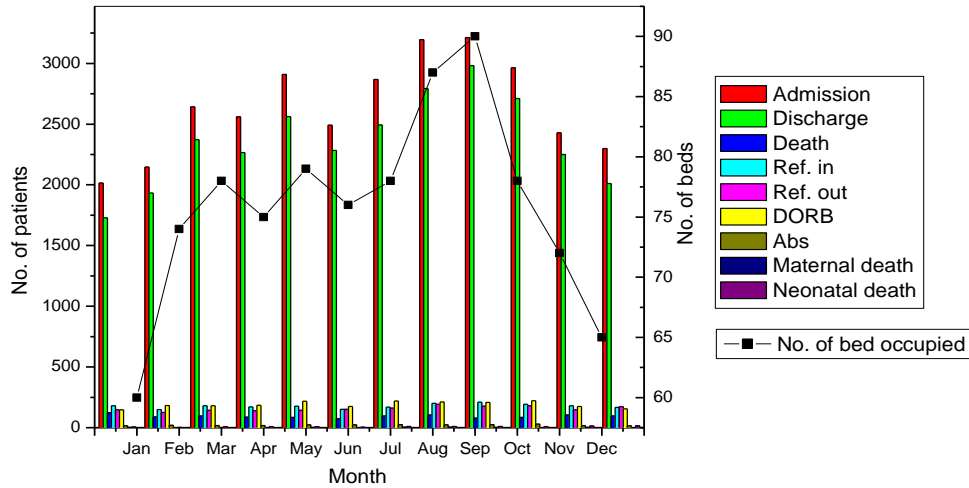


Figure 4 Monthly accounts of patients in District Hospital, Balurghat Town.

Table 2 and figure 4 represent the month-wise overall performances performed by the District Hospital in 2014 with the bed occupancy rate and monthly records of patients in

2014 respectively. On the other hand, the yearly maternal and O.T. performances of District Hospital in 2015 are showed in the table 3 & 4 and figure 5 & 6 respectively.

Table 3 Maternal performance of District Hospital, 2015.

Year	Normal delivery	Breech	Others	Forceps	Still birth	LUCS	LUCS Tubectomy	Live birth	
								Male	Female
2010	3053	112	82	24	124	906	48	1993	1942

Source: District Hospital, Balurghat, Dakshin Dinajpur.

Table 4 O.T. performances of District Hospital, 2015.

Year	Gynae		General		Eye		ENT		Orthopedic	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
2010	952	14	123	213	276	39	10	26	26	97

Source: District Hospital, Balurghat, Dakshin Dinajpur.

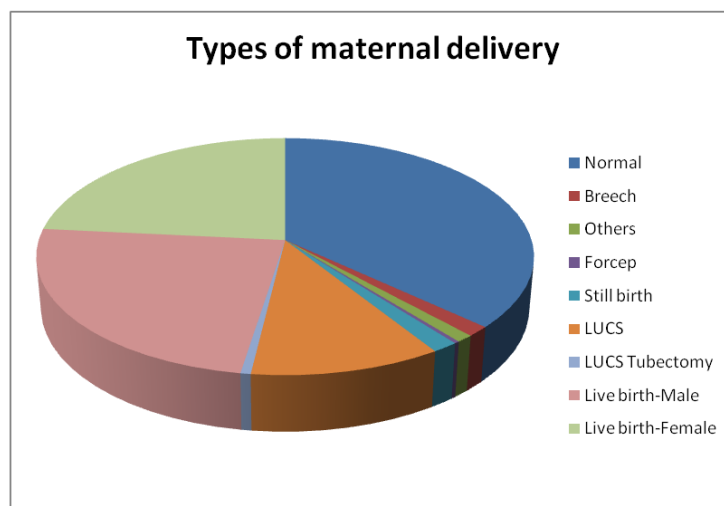


Figure 5 Maternal performances by District Hospital in Balurghat Town, 2015.

6. Performance of operation theatre in 2015

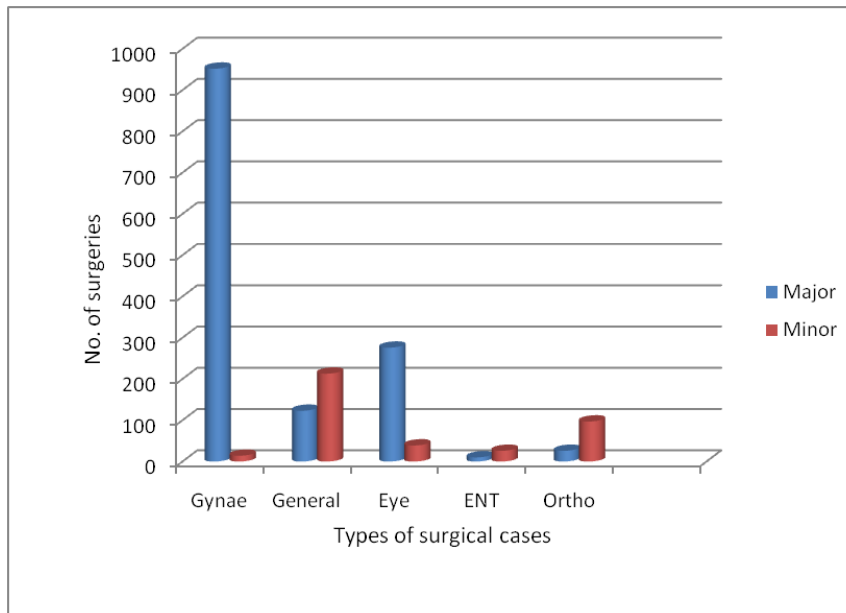


Figure 6 O.T. performances by District Hospital in Balurghat Town.

However, the health-care services available in District Hospital require more upgradation and some modern treatment facilities should be introduced to fulfill the needs of the citizens of Balurghat.

7. Present scenario of Balurghat District and Super Speciality Hospital

Balurghat District Hospital has been upgraded to the Super Speciality status just only few years back. Balurghat District and Super Speciality Hospital is one of the most advanced, updated and modern equipped multispecialty government hospital in the northern territory of West Bengal. The overall situation of the hospital is considerably improved than the previous status. A group of skilled health-care professionals are engaged here to provide an integrated health-care solution for the Balurghat town as well as Dakshin Dinajpur District. Now, it provides all the out-patient services as well as in-patient services with all facilities in Orthopaedics, General and Laparoscopic Surgery, Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Paediatrics and SNCU, Eye, ENT, Oncology, advanced Dialysis Unit etc. It meets the needs of its patients from Balurghat town vis-à-vis from the whole district.

8. Insufficient private sector in health-care

Significantly the investment of private and public-private sectors in health-care is very nominal in Balurghat according to the requirement. Although, there is a huge space for such

investment because the District Hospital can't fulfill the necessity of the urban people of Balurghat and its hinterland while on the other side the people compel to go outside for better treatment due to the deficiency in present health-care infrastructure. However, no big steps have yet been made in this regard. Only two private nursing homes viz. *Basanti Seva Kendra* and *Majumder Nursing Home* were situated in the town, established during the first phase of 90's decade whose infrastructures are not so impressive. Mainly some minor surgical and gynaecological cases are operated here. On the other hand, a voluntary eye hospital (*Prayas Atreyee*) was established in the year 2000 through the personal effort of Late Sisir Ghosh, renowned social worker of Balurghat. But such kind of efforts both on private and voluntary basis cannot be able to achieve the target. To get better result on the pathological tests and for some basic needs like C.T. scan, digital x-ray, TMT, EEG, Colour Doppler, Halter Monitoring, Endoscopy etc. people very often used to go to the near-by Malda or Raiganj towns. Keeping in mind such inconveniences of the city dwellers, the municipal authority has made a *Pouro Matrisadan and Hospital* in collaboration with the Sonoscan Health-care Pvt. Ltd., Malda on PPP model which started its journey on and from 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2008 with the provision of 30 beds and almost all kinds of modern infrastructures for different medical and pathological tests are available here. Now the situation is quite better than the previous. A comparative study made between different health-care institutions (table 5 & figure 7).

Table 5 Infrastructure of different health-care institutions in Balurghat Town (2016).

Indicator	District Hospital (Govt.)	Pouro Matrisadan & Hospital (PPP)	Majumder Nursing Home (Pvt.)	Basanti Seva Kendra (Pvt.)	Prayas Atreyee (Voluntary Eye Hospital)
No. of bed	320	30	12	15	20
No. of doctor	34	08	07	23	05
No. of nurse	139	47	10	27	05
No. of total staff	277	35	06	23	09

Source: Dist. Hospital, Pouro Matrisadan, Majumder Nursing Home, Basanti Seva Kendra & Prayas Atreyee.

## 9. Infrastructure of health-care institutions

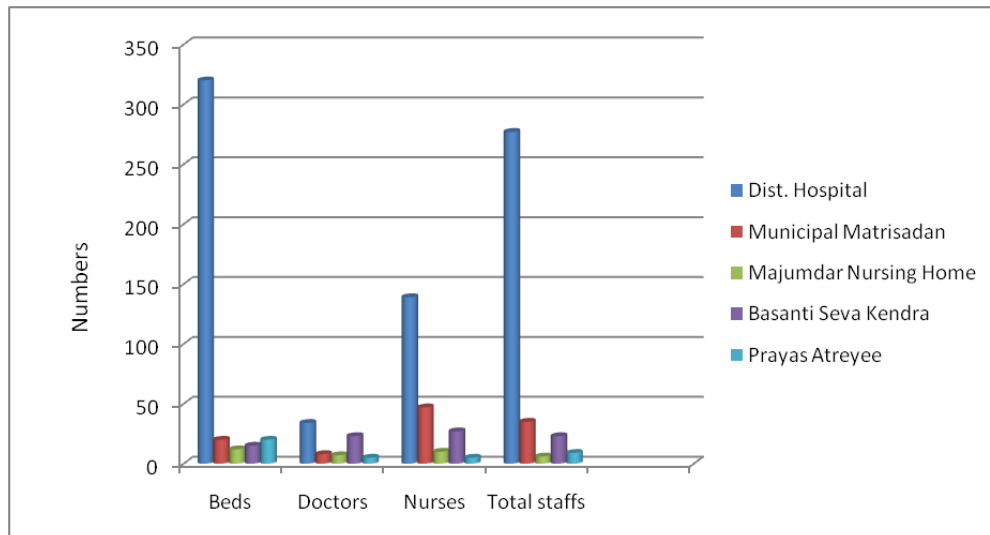


Figure 7 Comparison between infrastructures of different health-care institutions in Balurghat Town, 2016.

## 10. Inadequate infrastructure for better treatment

Practically it can't be denied that the existing infrastructure regarding health-care is too poor and inadequate to serve properly the urban population of Balurghat. Both of the government and private sectors have the same picture in this context. In such dynamic era it is still observed in the town that the people are died from those diseases which are now curable. On the one hand, insufficient local health-care facilities and on the other due to some communication backwardness, serious condition of the patients, and incapacity of financial supports most of the people are unable to take their patients to outside for better treatment and they have nothing to do rather await overwhelmingly. However, those who have enough financial support are going for better treatment mostly to Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Delhi and Mumbai.

## 11. Conclusion

This chapter attempts an overview of the state of delivery of health-care services in Balurghat town—their availability,

shortage and future solution to meet the present crisis. The overview presents a clear picture of deficiency and negligence, although there are some glimpses of significant achievements also noticed in the delivery of this service. In respect to the upliftment of health-care system, keen attention should be given particularly on the District Hospital as it is the only hope for the common people. It is very hopeful event that it has already been upgraded to the super speciality status and few schemes are already approved from the government side and few are waiting for approval to open some new wards in District Hospital like Neo-natal ward, Nutritional rehabilitation centre, Thalassaemia day-care centre, Genetic ward, 4 bedded ICCU, Special clinic for diabetes, stroke, cardio-vascular disease and cancer. Rupees 10 crores has sanctioned to construct another 200 extended beds. Citizens are eagerly waiting for those days.

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