

생활인프라 복합화시설의 운영실태 진단: 인구감소지역을 중심으로

Management Status of Living Infrastructure Complex
: the case of Local Government with Declining Population

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SUMMARY

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Overview

Through the 'Life SOC 3-Year Plan' and the 'Living SOC Complex Project', the previous government focused on supplying living infrastructure that is close to people's daily lives and promoted equity-conscious supply policies, such as expanding facilities in underserved areas that lack access to living infrastructure. As of June 2023, 20% of the 500 living infrastructure complexes supplied through the Three-Year Plan had been completed and started operation. In depopulated areas with low population density and relatively poor financial conditions, it is necessary to improve services through complex facilities, but it is difficult to maintain facilities and there is a risk that financial deficits may occur, making it difficult to operate sustainably, so it is time to establish a new living infrastructure support policy so that local governments can plan and operate affordable living infrastructure according to local conditions.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to diagnose the current status of accessibility to living infrastructure and operation and management of complex facilities in depopulated areas, and to suggest policy directions for operation and management of living infrastructure complex facilities considering the characteristics of depopulated areas. To this end, this study aims to specifically identify the operational status of complex facilities created and currently operated through the Living SOC Complex Project in declining population areas, and to provide policy support directions to improve the operational management efficiency and sustainability of living infrastructure complex facilities in declining population areas.

Main Findings

□ Achievements and Limitations of Living Infrastructure Supply Policies

To summarize the achievements of the Life SOC 3-Year Plan in terms of quality of life, it has improved the level of people's enjoyment of living infrastructure and expanded their experience of using it through the provision of living infrastructure. Over the past three years, 530 complex projects have been selected, and the improvement of accessibility through the provision of facilities has reduced travel time by around 5 minutes and increased the experience of using living infrastructure complex facilities. On the other hand, the limitations of the policy are that the number of living infrastructure facilities is still insufficient in terms of quantity and the experience and satisfaction of users of complex facilities. Problems in the implementation process include inefficiencies due to divisions between departments, a decline in the quality of plans due to tight project implementation schedules, and rigidity due to the limitations of locally-led planning, which was originally targeted. In depopulated areas, the lack of administrative capacity of local governments has been a constraining factor from the planning stage, which is also seen as a negative factor in improving the quality of planning and sustainable operational management. According to an analysis of the accessibility of 14 types of living infrastructure in 89 depopulated areas, depopulated areas are less accessible to living infrastructure than non-depopulated areas, and the less populated the local government, the worse the accessibility. By administrative unit, accessibility decreases from east to west to south, and accessibility of all living infrastructure except health centers is below the national average in areas with declining population. These supply characteristics suggest the need for the continuation of complexization projects as an efficient way of supplying facilities under the condition that additional demand for living infrastructure in depopulated areas will still exist in the future.

□ Operation and Management of Living Infrastructure Complexes in Declining Population Areas

We conducted in-depth interviews with officials and operational managers at 11 living infrastructure complexes in declining population areas that have been opened and operated under the Living SOC Complex project. Most of the facilities, including

large-scale complexes, are operated on a contracted or mixed basis, and two of the facilities directly managed by local governments are staffed by officials and librarians from the main facility library, while two of the complexes are relatively small, with each district directly managing operations. The in-depth interviews revealed the following operational management practices.

First, we found characteristics according to the way the complex facilities are operated. Directly managed facilities are prone to difficulties due to the lack of time and expertise of the officials in charge in establishing the operation plan. On the other hand, the advantage of outsourcing is that the outsourcing organization, which has expertise in facility operation, can more efficiently establish and immediately execute the operation management plan. However, there is a difficulty that the actual preparation period until the opening is short because the direct participation of the outsourcing organization is possible after the selection of the outsourcing organization.

Second, we found difficulties in operation management due to the characteristics of complex facilities. Due to the nature of complex facilities, safety issues are a concern as various users enter and exit, and the need for user access control and separation of movement lines adds to the workload of operating personnel, resulting in high fatigue. When static and active facilities are created together, conflicts such as noise may occur, and unfair division of duties and work burden may occur when planning maintenance and programs for public spaces, so cooperation between operating entities is necessary.

Third, we found difficulties related to the characteristics of depopulated areas. In areas with low population density and low accessibility to public transportation and walking, multifunctional facilities have fewer users, and program specialization is important to activate their use. However, it is difficult to invite outside lecturers due to the region's inaccessibility from metropolitan areas and large cities. It is difficult to expect operational efficiency through resident participation due to the large number of elderly people and small number of young people, and this is also a constraint to activating use. Furthermore, it was pointed out that it is difficult for facility managers to acquire practices and techniques that can be used as a reference for operational management due to the small number of local facility operation cases and human resources.

The analysis of 11 multifunctional facilities with excellent operational management

found that the common factors of excellence are: a location with good accessibility for users, establishing a systematic operational management plan, setting programs and operating hours that take into account user demand, maintaining mutual cooperation among operational management entities, and continuously collecting opinions and feedback.

When analyzing the cases of facilities with difficulties in operational management, it was found that the lack of a systematic operational management plan, the lack of detailed standards and expertise required for facility operation, the lack of linkage between operational management of individual facilities within a complex, and difficulties in operating budgets and manpower supply were obstacles to operational efficiency.

☐ How to Improve Operational Management of Living Infrastructure in Declining Population Areas

By synthesizing the operation status of living infrastructure complex facilities, suggestions from stakeholders, and demands for policy support, we derived directions for improving the operation management of living infrastructure in depopulated areas.

First, it is necessary to secure the possibility of central government support for operating costs related to complex facilities. Compared to single-function facilities, living infrastructure complexes require additional operational management tasks in terms of space management, program planning, and cooperation among multiple operating entities, and it is necessary to expand operating hours by expanding operating personnel to meet the needs of various users. In depopulated areas, where financial independence is low and residents' incomes are often not high, there are realistic limitations in preparing operating costs for living infrastructure facilities using local government resources alone, so it is most important to prepare for the possibility of central government support for operating costs, and legal and institutional improvements are needed. In addition, in order to expand support to include labor costs in the operating costs of complex living infrastructure facilities, the basis and criteria for state funding should be clearly established.

Second, it is necessary to strengthen professionalism through outsourcing. If local governments operate the facilities themselves, they lack expertise in operational management due to rotational work, and there are limitations in engaging local

residents. Given that it is more difficult to engage residents in declining areas due to the aging population, it is essential to secure expertise through outsourced management and establish a governance system that collaborates with local governments and strengthens resident participation. However, in the case of small-scale facilities, there is a lack of incentive for private management organizations to participate, so by introducing a consolidated management approach for multiple facilities, it is possible to increase the efficiency, flexibility, and convenience of operations while reducing management costs. If it is difficult to find an outsourcing organization, it is necessary to actively discover and develop an operating entity through cooperation with external organizations or experts.

Third, a dedicated management organization should be clearly established. It is necessary to establish a dedicated organization within the local government for the management and operation of living infrastructure complexes, and legal and institutional support measures are needed to consider the composition of various types of management organizations in addition to civil servants and to promote them. According to the results of the operation survey, public libraries have the advantage of securing a certain level of expertise in operation and management even if they are directly operated by local governments, so if public libraries are the main function of the local government, it is recommended to consider creating a dedicated management organization centered on the department in charge of the library. In large-scale complexes, it is effective to create a dedicated management organization based on the entrusted management organization of individual facilities with a high proportion of area, such as living culture centers and family centers.

Fourth, it is necessary to build a foundation for sustainable operation through support for resident autonomy. Although it is difficult to assume that residents' associations designed as community decision-making organizations have the institutional capacity to execute efficient operational management of living infrastructure, it is expected to be effective as a procedure to operate living infrastructure by private entities with operational capabilities in terms of legal authority and representation. It is expected to be effective if the residents' association organizes a subcommittee of the residents' association with residents who are willing and capable of operating the living infrastructure.

Future Research

In order to improve the quality of life of local residents, prevent rapid population outflow, and respond to population decline by expanding the living population, spatial policies that secure a certain level of living infrastructure services in declining areas are urgently needed. In particular, a methodological shift in the way local governments take the lead in planning and executing the supply and service of local living infrastructure will contribute to laying the spatial and institutional foundations for responding to the issue of population decline, not only by providing services at the level of individual facilities, but also by collaborating with various actors in the community.

As a public good, improving the level of service and operational efficiency of living infrastructure requires a mid- to long-term strategy that responds to local needs, starting at the project planning stage, to ensure that the location and function of facilities meet the needs of the community and that spaces and programs are designed to support the activities that residents want. In sparsely populated and inaccessible depopulated areas, there is a high demand for integrated use of the detailed functions of multifunctional facilities, which puts a greater burden on operational management to expand hours of use and specialize programs, so systematic support should be provided to expand the operational staff and strengthen their expertise. In particular, cooperation between basic and metropolitan local governments and the central government is needed so that the roles and responsibilities for operational management of complex facilities are not limited to a few people within the basic administrative units (towns, villages, and cities) to which each facility belongs.

The direction for improving the operation of living infrastructure complex facilities in depopulated areas proposed in this study focuses on a basic survey. It is left as a follow-up research task to devise a business and operation model suitable for the conditions of declining population areas, and to identify specific system improvement measures to improve the expertise and service level of operating personnel.