

URBANIZATION TRENDS IN INDIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Urbanization is a part of the development process. Historically, India's population has been predominantly rural, but since the year 1991 the urban population was increasing, and today it stands about more than 30% of the total population of the country. In India, the percentage increase in population has been consistently greater than the percentage increase in rural population. In this paper an attempt is made to find out the trends in urbanization in India during 1961-2011. This article tries to present the urbanization taking place in India, and also gives particular attention to the emerging issues and challenges, associated with the urbanization process in India and some suggestions to overcome it.

Key Words: urbanization, development process, migrate, population

Introduction

The unequal infrastructural growth across the country has divided India into two parts viz. rural and urban. The differences in these two parts arises with regards to the electric supply, quality of education and health facilities, transportation, drinking water and other basic facilities. In the backward stagnant societies the process of urbanization is rather slow. In the backward stagnant societies the process of urbanization is rather slow. This is because cities fail to offer employment opportunities to people living in countryside. Those who migrate to cities in such societies are in fact pushed out of villages due to economic and social pressure. In contrast to stagnant backward societies, urbanization process is fast in rapidly growing economies where newly established industries and ancillary activities continuously provide jobs to people who wish to migrate to cities. The economic pull of cities in this phase of development becomes particularly strong if industrial growth is fast and in spite of high capital intensity, industries offer jobs in increasingly large numbers.

Urbanization: A concept

Urbanization refers to a change of residence (places) from traditional rural economies to a modern industrial one. It is a progressive concentration (Davis, 1965) of a population in an urban unit. It is a long-term process. Urbanization refers to the proportionate increase of the urban population in relation to the total population in a given country. It means that, if urban population increases at a faster rate than rural population so that the percentage of urban population in the total population of the country increases continuously (Mahesh Chand and V.K.Puri).

There are three stages in the process of urbanization. Stage one is the initial stage characterized by rural traditional society with predominance in agriculture. Stage two refers to an acceleration stage where basic restructuring of the economy and investments take place in building social overhead capitals including transportation, communication. Proportions of urban population gradually increase from 25 per cent to 40 per cent, 50 per cent, 60 per cent and so on. Dependence on primary sector gradually declines. The third stage is known as terminal

stage where urban population exceeds 70 per cent or more. At this stage, level of urbanization remains more or less same or constant. The rate of growth of urban population and total population becomes same at this terminal stage.

According to the Census definition of India, an urban area consists of (Census of India, 2011):

1) **All Statutory Towns:** All places with a Municipality, Corporation, Cantonment Board or Notified Town Area Committee, etc. so declared by State law; and

2) **Census Towns:** which places and satisfy following criteria:-

- a minimum population of 5000 ;
- at least 75% of male working population engaged in non agricultural pursuits; and
- a density of population of at least 400 persons per sq km.

Furthermore, Population Census in India classifies urban settlement into six size classes as per the limits indicated below

Population Size	Category
100,000 and more	I
50,000 to 100,000	II
20,000 to 50,000	III
10,000 to 20,000	IV
5,000 to 10,000	V
Less than 5,000	VI

Review of Literature

Lalit Batra (2009) in his paper, ‘A Review of Urbanization and Urban Policy in Post-Independent India’, he tries to give insight into the existence of urban policy starting from the British rule to the post independent period and more importantly, the current neoliberal reforms undergoing in the field of urban affairs.

According to, “Report on Indian Urban Infrastructure and Services”, the urbanization in India is inevitable thus, the need for solving the various problems associated with it requires a combination of actions, starting with increased investment; strengthening the framework for governance, and most importantly capacity building for the people and the institutions engage in urban affairs.

Isher Judge Ahluwalia, in her book ‘Transforming Our Cities: Postcards of Change’ (2014), discusses about, the majority of cities in India have been facing huge challenges in all the fronts or in other words, for the government, the governance of urban areas is a big challenge. The reasons are lack of basic facilities like good roads, water, housing, parks, electricity etc.

Sadashivam, T. and Shahla Tabassu (2016), in their paper “Trends of Urbanization in India: Issues and Challenges In the 21st Century” discusses the trends in urbanization in India. The paper also gives particular attention to the emerging issues and challenges, associated with the urbanization process in India and some suggestions to overcome it.

Urbanization Trends in India

The (Table 1) clearly shows that the total population of India was increased from 1028.6 million in 2001 to 1210.2 million in 2011. The urban population in the year 2011 was 377.1 million which was 286.1 million in 2001. The percentage of urban population to the total population of the country was 31.2 % in 2011, which was 27.8% in the year 2001.

Table 1. Decadal Urban Population Growth in India (Census of India)

Year	Total Population (in million)	Rural Population	Rural increase over previous census	Urban Population	Urban increase over previous census	Urban population as percentage of total population
1951	361.1	298.7	---	62.4	---	17.28
1961	439.2	360.3	61.6	78.9	16.5	18.0
1971	548.2	439.0	78.7	109.1	30.2	19.9
1981	683.3	523.9	84.9	159.5	50.4	23.3
1991	846.3	628.7	104.8	217.6	58.1	25.7
2001	1028.7	742.5	113.8	286.1	65.5	27.8
2011	1210.2	833.1	90.6	377.1	91.0	31.2

Source: Census of India, various years.

The (Table 2) shows the decadal growth rate of rural and urban population. From this it will be easy to calculate the difference between urban-rural growths of population.

Table 2: Decadal growths rate of Urban-Rural population.

Year	Decadal growth rate of rural population	Decadal growth rate of urban population	URGD*
1951	---	----	----
1961	17.1	20.9	3.8
1971	21.8	38.3	16.5
1981	19.3	46.2	26.9
1991	20.0	36.4	16.4
2001	18.1	31.5	13.4
2011	12.2	31.8	19.6

Note: URGD: Urban-Rural Growth Differential.

The decadal growth rate of urban population has consistently been higher than the decadal growth of rural population. Urban growth at 46.2 percent was fastest during the decade 1971-81. It declined to 36.4 percent during 1980s, 31.5 percent during 1990s and 31.2 percent during the last decade. While urban population registered a decadal growth of 46.2 percent in 1971-81, the rural population increased by only 19.3 percent. As a result, URGD was as high as 26.9. This fell thereafter and stood 19.6 in 2011.

The urbanization data for the latest Census 2011 has suggested that the decadal increase in the size of urban population (by 91.0 million people over the decade 2001-11) was greater than that of the rural population (by 90.6 million) for the first time since Independence.

Urbanization and the States in India:

In India, according to 2001 census, population residing in urban areas was 27.8 percent that has been increased to 31.2 percent in 2011. Maharashtra was the most urbanized state in India, followed by Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu that has contributed around one-third of total urban population of India in 2011. However Maharashtra's urban population of 50.8 million far exceeds that of Uttar Pradesh 44.5 million and Tamil Nadu which was at 34.9 million, as per 2011 Census.

Table 3: State wise urban population in India 2001 & 2011 (%)

States	Percent of total urban population of India		Ranking as a percent of total urban population of India	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Maharashtra	14.4	13.5	1	1
Uttar Pradesh	12.1	11.8	2	2
Tamil Nadu	9.61	9.26	3	3
West Bengal	7.84	7.71	4	4
Andhra Pradesh	7.27	7.48	5	5
Gujarat	6.62	6.83	6	6
Karnataka	6.28	6.27	7	7
Madhya Pradesh	5.58	5.32	8	8
Rajasthan	4.62	4.52	9	9
Delhi	4.51	4.34	10	10
Kerala	2.89	4.23	12	11
Bihar	3.03	3.12	11	12
Punjab	2.89	2.76	13	13
Haryana	2.14	2.34	14	14
Jharkhand	2.09	2.1	15	15
Odisha	1.93	1.86	16	16
Chhattisgarh	1.46	1.57	17	17
Assam	1.2	1.17	18	18
Jammu & Kashmir	0.88	0.91	19	19
Uttarakhand	0.76	0.81	20	20
Tripura	0.19	0.25	24	21
Goa	0.23	0.24	21	22
Manipur	0.2	0.22	23	23
Himachal Pradesh	0.21	0.18	22	24
Meghalaya	0.16	0.16	25	25
Mizoram	0.15	0.15	26	26
Nagaland	0.12	0.15	27	27
Arunachal Pradesh	0.08	0.08	28	28
Sikkim	0.02	0.04	29	29
India	100	100		

Source: Author's calculation from Census of India 2001-2011.

The process of urbanization depends on different like social, economical and political factors in different regions. There has been considerable variation across states in the rates of urbanization during 2001-2011. There are certain regions like Delhi, Goa and Mizoram that record significant levels of urbanization and overall their level

of urbanization has been higher over the last two decades. In Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana the ranking of urbanization has declined slightly over the past two decades.

It has been observed from the table 4 that all the southern states along with Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra and west Bengal have greater urbanization level the average of India but among small sates like Goa continue to top the list (62.5% urban) followed by Mizoram (52.1%). Among the major states, like Tamil Nadu continues to be ahead of others with the levels of urbanization at 48.4 percent in 2011. States which lag behind are Himachal Pradesh at the bottom with 10 percent level of urbanization followed by Bihar (11.3%), Assam (14%) and Orissa (16.6%). Other states like Utter Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand also continue to have lower levels of urbanization than the national average.

Table 4: Urbanization across States of India, 2011

Level of Urbanization	States
50 % and above (3)	Delhi, Goa, Mizoram
40 % to 50 % (4)	Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat
30 % to 40 % (7)	Karnataka, Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, West Bengal, Uttarakhand
20 % to 30 % (11)	Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Tripura, Sikkim, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya
Below 20 % (4)	Odisha, Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh
31.2 %	All-India

Issues and Challenges of Urbanization in India

As our country moves along on the path of urbanization, we will find new problems and challenges emerging out of it.

A). The urbanization is also one of the reasons, for the global warming throughout the world and led to climate change even in India. The climate change is primarily caused by the building up of greenhouse gases e.g. carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and others in the atmosphere, which led to the rise in the temperature of the earth. The climate change is basically the result of human induced activities such as agricultural systems, industrial activities, fossil fuel consumption, land use pattern and many more (Sadashivam, 2010). Because of climate change, there has been a lot of desperate migration of those poor villagers to the towns and cities in search of ways to make a living; and this will increase when the land is no longer productive or severe drought, flood and other extreme weather conditions make it impossible to earn a living by farming. This will have political implications too, as these climate change migrants will put pressure on an already existing lack of infrastructure and basic amenities in urban areas (Sadashivam, 2010a). This will also affect the food production in the country.

B). There exist many sociological implications of the concept of urbanization and the some important one being, first because of urbanization lot of construction activity taking place in the metropolitan cities like Delhi, Chennai etc. Furthermore, there is an increase in number of vehicles, where one family have more than one vehicle which resulted into lack of parking spaces and traffic jams especially in Delhi roads, which in recent time has led to lot of quarrels and heated debate between the people and in some cases it led to minor injury and even deaths also.

C) Another important issue in the process of urbanization is the urban poverty. One factor comes, in the way of urban poverty eradication was being migration in large number of people from rural to urban areas, which results in poor living in urban areas are more than rural areas. These people are usually stays in slums and sometimes in road side, with temporary tent or even did not get any shelter also. The policies and programmes implemented

by the governments, for decrease of urban poverty were some extent ineffective, because of lack of supervision, monitoring and coordination on the part of the agencies of the governments.

Suggestions to Overcome Negative Implications of the Urbanization

Rural areas need to be made developed, so that people don't think about migrating in such huge number. Here, the role of State government becomes more important, along with the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the latter needs to be given more powers and functions. The 73rd constitutional amendment act related to rural local self government needs to be re-look and frame according to the real needs of the rural people, especially because of climate change, the people who depends upon agriculture directly or indirectly are mostly going to be affected. Furthermore, initiating number of programmes for the welfare of the people living in rural areas, especially related to providing employment by the government; like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which guarantees 100 days of work for one unemployed person in a family in a year. Since, unemployment is the main reason for migration of the people, especially to urban areas. Also, the private players need to be encouraged, so to set up business in rural areas by giving them concession of various kinds. Even if people want to migrate for better opportunity and life in that situation, instead of putting pressure on big cities, it is preferable to identify and develop the small towns and cities, which can absorb the rural migrant located near to their place.

As argued by Amitabh Kundu, if the problems of the large and increasing number of census towns are to be tackled, the Central and state governments must recognize their urban status 'statutorily' and design a scheme similar to Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) to strengthen their infrastructure base and promote them as centers of inclusive growth.

Conclusion

At present India is witnessing a sharp rise in urbanization. At the same time, India is among the countries of low level of urbanization even less than the average world urbanization. More over India Ranks second in the world next to China. But about the proportion of urban population with respect to world urban population, both India and China accounts for 30 percent of urban population. According to the 2011 Census, the absolute increase in the urban population of India was higher than that in rural population.

This is rightly said, that this century is urban century, where more people are living in urban areas. The urbanization concept provides both the challenges and opportunities for every country, although it may not be uniform in every country. In India also, the urban population is increasing in good number, but there exist a problem of infrastructure. But, urbanization needs to be sustainable in two counts i.e. First, it is need to equally benefit all the people in the society i.e. socially inclusive and secondly, environmentally sustainable.

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