

A Peep into the Dark Side of Urbanisation in India

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Abstract

In this paper an attempt is made to assess the dark side of urbanisation owed to economic development. Since economic development is more urban based, the spatial composition of growth is expected to change, resulting in a migration of population from rural to urban areas. Given the wide outcomes of development, population mobility across space is an outcome of economic growth too. The spatial composition of growth reflected in terms of a rural-urban development motivates people to shift to areas with better employment prospects and living conditions. On the other side it delivered results in negative tales of stress, crime, suicide, accidents and disputes. Keeping in view these outcomes off the process of economic growth, this paper makes an attempt to explicate the association of urbanisation (an outcome of development) with distress (represented through crime and its other parameters) for sixteen major states of Indian Union at three point of time i.e. 1981, 1991 and 2001. The empirical analysis made conclude that the contrary to expectations of development subscribing to the general happiness and well-being to all has actually moved towards consumerist development that further leads to more 'unhappy state'.

1. Introduction

Migration and urbanization are direct manifestations of the process of economic development in space, particularly in the contemporary phase of globalization. As the world moves, there will be more number of people living in urban areas than rural areas. In fact, the 21st century witnessed a rapid growth in urban population in Asia. The urban population in this continent will double in a period of 30 years. India has shared the growth pattern and rapid urbanisation with some of the fastest growing regions in Asia. The Country has witnessed around 8% growth in GDP in the last

couple of years and has planned to achieve a target of over 9% growth by the end of 11th plan period. India's urban population is also increasing at a faster rate than its total population. With over 575 million people, India will have 41% percent of its population living in cities and towns by 2030 AD from the present level of 286 million and 27.8%¹. In India, cities contribute over 55 % to country's GDP and urbanisation has been recognised as an important component of economic growth.

With India becoming increasingly globalized and urban, there is also an increase in the number of poor people living here. As per the latest NSSO survey reports there are over 80 million poor people living in the cities and towns of India. The Slum population is also increasing and as per TCPO estimates 2001, over 61.80 million people were living in slums². Urban poverty poses the problems of housing and shelter, water, sanitation, health, education, social security and livelihoods along with special needs of vulnerable

groups like women, children and aged people. Poor people live in slums which are overcrowded, often polluted and lack basic civic amenities like clean drinking water, sanitation and health facilities. Most of them are involved in informal sector activities where there is constant threat of eviction, removal, confiscation goods and almost non-existent social security cover.

From the above said discussion it can be capitulated that economic development and urbanisation are closely linked. While conforming the important potential gains from economic reforms, experience has also highlighted some of the impediment like, increase in discontent, crime, suicides, accidental deaths, single parent homes, and an increase in number of disputes, that are few by-products of urbanisation.

2. Data and Methodology

(2.1) Sources of Data

Urbanisation for **India** is calculated from 'Census in India' for sixteen major states. It is proportion of the total population living in urban areas (Table 1).

Table 1: Percentage of Urbanised Population in All India and States (1981-2001)

Sr. No	States	1981	1991	2001
1	Andhra Pradesh	23.32	26.89	27.30
2	Assam	10.29	11.10	12.90
3	Bihar	12.47	13.14	10.46 [@]
4	Gujarat	31.10	34.49	37.36
5	Haryana	21.88	24.63	28.92
6	Himachal Pradesh	7.61	8.69	9.80
7	Karnataka*	28.89	30.92	33.99
8	Kerala	18.74	26.39	25.96
9	Madhya Pradesh	20.29	23.18	26.46
10	Maharashtra	35.03	38.69	42.43
11	Orrisa	11.79	13.38	14.99
12	Punjab	27.68	29.55	33.92
13	Rajasthan	21.05	22.88	23.39
14	Tamil Nadu	32.95	34.15	44.04
15	Uttar Pradesh	18.32	19.84	20.78 [@]
16	West Bengal	26.47	27.48	27.97
17	All India	23.30 ⁺	25.73 [*]	27.82

Source: Calculated

In the paper distress separate indicators i.e. TCC, TUNACD, TS, SPH, ND, YA, and YS are taken from 'Crime in India' reports at three points 1981, 1991 and 2001. National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) publishes these reports every year since 1954. The rate of crime defined as the 'number of crimes' per lakh inhabitants. To cluster the distress as a composite index taxonomic technique has been applied.

(2.2) Methodology

So to confront the theoretical argument empirically, the following exercise has been carried out. Firstly major indicators i.e. urbanisation, distress(as a composite index) and separate indicators [Total Cognizable Crime (TCC), Total Unnatural Accidental Deaths (TUNACD), Total Suicide (TS), Single Parent Home (SPH), Industrial Disputes (ND), Youth Accidents (YA), and Youth Suicides (YS)] have computed. Secondly, to cluster the variables Taxonomic Technique has been employed. Thirdly, these variables are ranked and Spearman's Correlation found between them for sixteen major states at three point of time i.e. 1981, 1991 and 2001. These rank correlation coefficients have been tested for their being statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$. Fourthly, regression exercise is run here to validate the strength of the hypothesis the cause effect relationship between urbanisation and distress.

3. Results and Discussion

(a) Connection between Urbanisation and Distress (as a composite index):

As we know development is more than just expanding agricultural and industrial output and growth in real per capita income. As such it embraces, the more familiar terms of economic and social development. The level of social and economic development of a region is reflected in the degree of Urbanisation. Today, half the world's population lives in town and cities. Of the additional people expected between 2000 and 2015, nearly one billion will be added in urban areas compared to only 125 million in rural. Virtually this growth will take place in developing countries³. Where in India, 19.91 per cent people live in urban areas in 1971, increased to 27.82 per cent in 2001⁴. Urbanisation is associated with economic growth and development, providing vital opportunities for economic, social advancement and poverty reduction and low level of inequalities, if well managed. However it can also pose major threats to the achievement of sustainable development.

In the last few years, the proportion of the world's people living in urban areas has edged past the halfway mark, and many those not living in towns and cities are increasingly dependent upon urban centres for their economic, social, and political progress. Inevitably, as the numbers living in urban areas continue to increase, the achievement of global sustainable development will depend on managing the processes of urban development in a sustainable manner. Well managed urban growth and development can contribute not just to economic advancement but also reduced poverty and improved quality of life for all the citizens, including the poor. However, it also poses serious challenges to the sustainable development agenda— if badly managed; the urbanization process pollutes the environment, undermines the natural resources base, and may be associated with increased scale and depth of inequalities⁵. The statement is also supported with the results given below in the table 2.

**Table 2: Correlation between
Urbanisation and Gini Ratio (1981-2001)**

Spearman's Correlation	Gini Ratio
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Urbanisation 2001	.703*
Urbanisation 1991	.338
Urbanisation 1981	.221

N=16, Source: Calculated

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Comparing urbanization with gini ratios for per capita consumption expenditure, estimated from the respective consumption distribution for each of the years, it is apparent that with the rise in urbanisation leads to surge in inequalities over time with significant and positive association. Hence, economic growth is unsatisfactory if continuing and increasing inequity accompanies it.

Improvement in provisioning of infrastructure and services were subject to some radical rethinking including commercialization (increased cost recovery), competition, a reduced role for the public sector, and increased private sector with community participation⁶. While conforming the important potential gains from such reforms, experience has also highlighted some of the impediment like, increase in discontent, crime, suicides, accidental deaths, single parent homes, and an increase in number of disputes, that are few by-products of urbanisation. The aim here is not to explore the issue of how to measure urbanisation but rather to identify a few important correlates of it that may be useful in explaining its relationship with distress and its parameters, as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Urbanisation affiliation with Distress and its Indicators 1981-2001)

Spearman's Correlation	Distress	Total Cognizable Crime	Total Unnatural Deaths	Total Suicides	Single Parent Homes (Divorces)	No of Disputes	Youth Accident	Youth Suicide
Urbanisation 2001	.576**	.585**	.674*	.488	.397	.686*	.579**	.550**
Urbanisation 1991	.528**	.665*	.603*	.403	.250	.571**	.562**	.509**
Urbanisation 1981	.432	.690*	.541**	.159	.074	.576**	.532**	.226

*Note: * and ** Indicates the value significant at 1 and 5 percent level of significance (2-tailed).*

N=16, Source: Calculated

Correlation between urbanisation and distress in (table 3), that is weak and insignificant in (0.432) 1981, turns up significant to 0.528 in 1991 and 0.576 in 2001. Results argue that social changes such as urbanisation and industrialization are associated with increased negative traits in the society. Based on the Durkheimian⁷ notions of “the division of labour in society”, “mechanical/organic solidarity”, “anomie”, and “cultural lag”, theorists have contended that it is the speed rather than the level of development, which is important for understanding the patterns. Rapid change intensifies conflicts and throws society into temporary state of disequilibria where deviance tends to expand as values clash regarding appropriate norms. Advocates of this theoretical perspective explain cross-national variation “in terms of

industrialization, urbanization, and the resultant social disorganization and anomie” brought on by the process of modernization⁸.

The argument is carried forward by not focussing on how to measure Urbanisation, but to identify a few important correlations (Total Cognizable Crime, Total Unnatural Accidental Deaths, Total Suicides, Youth Suicides, Martial Instability and Number of disputes) that may be useful in explaining its relationship with Distress.

(b) Correlation between Urbanisation and Distress indicators (Separately) i.e. TCC, TUNACD, TS, SPH, ND, Youth Accidents, and Youth Suicide:

Urbanisation leads to crimes is vivid from table 3. That relation is significant at all points of time though this abates over time. Where correlation in 1981($r = 0.90$), 1991 ($r = 0.665$), all are significant at 0.01 per cent level turns to 0.585 ($p < 0.05$) in 2001. Crime may be regarded threat to life and this is the cost one has to pay to live in metropolitan cities. Therefore an increase in crime may be viewed not only as an alarming social trend and a threat to public order but also a challenge to the economic potential of any country⁹. It is observed that crime rates tend to be higher in urban and more densely settled areas than rural areas. Sociologists offer a number of explanations for this finding. One likely cause is the greater degree of anonymity and correspondingly lowers level of intimacy in day-to-day contact.

Accidents are unexpected, unplanned occurrences, which involve injury, may lead to death. Relation between urbanisation and unnatural accidental deaths is positive and strengthen over time (that is with the increase in urbanisation; TUNACDs are increasing). The correlation value in 1981 was, ($r = 0.541$, $p < 0.05$) that further strengthen to ($r = 0.603$, $p < 0.01$) in 1991, ($r = 0.674$, $p < 0.01$) in 2001. In the same way relation of urbanisation with youth accidents reinforced over time. With $r = 0.532$ in 1981, to $r = .562$ in 1991, Correlation is improving to 0.579 in 2001, with the significance level of 5 per cent (table 2). Hence, it is proved that accidents represent a major epidemic of today's consumerist society where human being is very busy in mad rush to get everything quickly. It is the price, which we are paying for technological progress. Increasing mechanization in agriculture and industry, inductions of semi skilled and unskilled workers in various operations and rapid increase in vehicular traffic chemical and changing life style have resulted in an increase in morbidity and mortality due to accidents.

Urbanisation comparison with total suicides and youth suicides revealed that with the increase in industrialization, and modernization, there has been an increase in total and youth suicides (table 3). Total suicides show mixed results, the insignificant and low correlation in 1981, further spin to rise in 1991 ($r = 0.403$) and turn to ($r = 0.488$) in 2001. As for the youth suicides there is a sharp rise from insignificant relation in 1981 to significant in 1991 ($r = 0.509$) and 2001 ($r = 0.550$). This phenomenon is present for the analysis of anomic tendencies in modern/urban societies. Urbanisation process in individual parts of society takes the form of “rapid, undirected, non-simultaneous and contradictory development”. These development leads to “tensions” in different areas of society, which intensify and become crisis¹⁰. As Bohle et al.¹¹ distinguish

between three type of crisis in society: the “structural crisis” lead to “innovation, ritualisation, withdrawal, protest and criminality”. “Regulation crises”, claim the cause “loss of orientation, loss of plausibility and uncertainty” and “cohesion crises” in concordance with Durkheim view, are seen to lead to “alienation, identity problems, isolation and suicide”.

It has now been well established that Urbanisation has brought a surge of Distress in the society. Yet, another indicator of distress amongst the people is the marital instability. Our results show that though it has not brought the society to the brink of chaos, yet the state us not of self actualization also. The negative correlation in 1981 turned positive in 1991 and 2001 though insignificant (table 3). Of all the changes in family life during the 21st century, perhaps the most dramatic — and the most far reaching it its implications — was the increase in the rate of divorce. Observers have attributed this change to a number of factors, including the increasing economic independence of women, rising expectations, and greater social acceptance of divorce¹². The largest numbers of studies have shown that marital disruption lead to stressful life. The uncoupling process typically sets into motion numerous events that people experience as stressful. These stressors, in turn increase the risk of negative emotional, behavioural health outcomes¹³.

Technological advancement to a totally new level spawned gigantic electromechanical machines, moving parts, belts, hoses, bearings, and bolts—all clattering and ratcheting along. And these new machines did more than augment raw muscle. Industrial civilization gave technology sensory organs, creating machines that could hear, see, and touch with greater accuracy and precision than human beings. It gave technology a womb, by inventing machines designed to give birth to new machines in infinite progression, i.e. machine tools. More important, it brought machines together in interconnected systems under a single roof, to create the factory and ultimately the assembly line within the factory¹⁴. In the globalise nation where the role of labour is complex. The production process itself can be a pulling to alienation. We found in the present study linkage between urbanisation and number of disputes turned to be positive and significant over time (table 3). Correlation between urbanisation and number of disputes are 0.576 ($p < 0.05$) in 1981, 0.571 ($p < 0.05$) in 1991 and 0.686 ($p < 0.01$) in 2001.

(c) Regression Equation for Urbanisation and Distress (1981-2001):

To further know the degree and nature of relationship regression equation with Urbanisation as dependent variable and Distress as independent variable has been run at four point of time (1981-2001).

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + u$$

Where Y = Urbanisation and,

X = Distress (cluster variable through taxonomic technique which includes TCC, TUNACD, TS, SPH and ND).

Table 4: Regression Equation for Urbanisation and Distress (1981-2001)

Year	Constant Term	Distress	R ²	Adjusted R ²
2001	1.950	.656*	0.368	0.323

	(1.442)	(2.854)		
1991	1.722 (1.499)	.606** (3.249)	0.430	0.389
1981	2.126 (1.464)	.587*** (2.710)	0.344	0.297

Dependent Variable: Urbanisation,

N=16, Source: Calculated

*Note: * and ** Indicates the value significant at 1 and 5 percent level of significance (2-tailed). “t” Statistics are shown in Parenthesis.*

Results shown in table 4 at four point of time, where β_1 value is positive and significant at 1 per cent level at all points, value of R^2 representing that model is good fit confirmed that urbanisation leads to distress. Though there is little fluctuation in the figures, the reason for this can be structural changes in the economy over time.

From the aforesaid discussion it can be capitulated that the probability of man living happily in a developed society is bleak. After a century of many catastrophes these doubts have given way to general pessimism. The question asked today is just how happy development makes the individual. Development is equated with exclusion and disintegration. The link between development and subjective well-being is more complex and dynamic than is often assumed today

4. Conclusion

The Indian experience with urbanization during the period of economic reforms has shown unprecedented development and increased urban inequality. Access to productive assets is either minimal or non-existent for a majority of urban households in other words people were deprived of many needs. A significant section of the urban population does not even own a place of shelter, not to speak of ownership of productive assets. This deprived needs led the people towards anti social threats (distress, crime, suicides, accidents and disputes) towards society that has been empirical tested in the paper. By ignoring the concerns of ordinary people, it seems that development actually fail to keep our promises and are definitely moving towards only material development that further leads to more ‘Unhappy State’.

References

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