

Urbanization In India: Causes and Consequences

Dr. Manindra Singha, Associate professor
Department of Economics
Lala Rural College, Lala, Hailakandi, Assam

Abstract :

Urbanization in India has been a process since the Indus valley civilization though slow and steady. As per the UN report going by the current trend 46% of total population will be in urban region of India by 2030. The net migration from rural to urban areas is resulted from the concomitant of rapid growth and expansion of industrial and service sectors in urban area. Migration of rural populace to urban centres in search of better livelihood and employment is the conspicuous factor behind the growth of urbanization. The result is that the rural sector gets deprived of skilled and able labourer and productivity which are all shifted to urban sectors. Moreover, neither the urban ventures offer substantial livelihood to majority of rural migrants over the rural sector is benefited with the underemployed urban settlers. The more urbanization the more decay in environmental and in the quality of life in the form of rush in demand for employment in the first place and in urban waste, urban transportation and urban air quality in the second. The present write up in question attempts to locate all pros and cons of urbanization in India vis-à-vis its impact and consequences in human life in general.

Key words: Urbanization, Migration, Town, Municipality Corporation. Cantonment Board

1. Introduction

Urbanization at the present context is an emerging topic. It has become a hot topic and matter of great debate and discussion. Urbanization has both positive and negative impact on the socio economic conditions of an urban society. Urbanization is the most significant phenomenon of the 20th century which has affected all aspects of national life in India. Being the second most populous country in the world after China, India's fast growing urbanization has a regional as well as world wide impact. India's urban population constitutes a sizeable proportion of the world's urban population (Madhavi, N.R. 2009). India has a long tradition of urbanization which has continued since the days of the Indus valley civilization. The Indus Valley people had attained high standards of town planning and architectural style. Despite a long tradition of urbanization, India was at a low level of urbanization at the beginning of the 20th century with only one-tenth of its population residing in urban areas. It was around one-sixth urban at the time of Independence. In 2001 census 27.7 per cent of its population lived in urban areas (Madhavi, 2009). The UN says that if urbanization continues in the present rate, then 46 percent of the total population i.e. 634 million people will be in urban regions of India by 2030. If such an exodus is not checked and corrected, it would lead to extreme urban decay and malice where urban sustainability would then become one big utopian vision (Chelladurai, A 2009).

2. Objective of the Study:

1. To study the trend of urbanization at the present context
2. To analyze the growth of urbanization in India
3. To examine the causes and consequences of urbanization
4. To offer some suggestion for sustainable urban development

3. Indian Census Definition of Urban Area:

In census India; 2001 two types of town were identified (R.G. 2001):

- (a) Statutory towns: all places with a Municipality Corporation. Cantonment Board or notified town area committee. etc. so declared by state law.
- (b) Census towns: places which satisfy following criteria:
- (c) A minimum population of 5000

At least 75% of male working population engaged in nonagricultural Pursuit and A density of population of at least 400 persons per sq km

4. Growth of Urban Population:

A look at the percentage of urban population to total population over the years in India shows that there is an increasing trend in the urbanization process. As could be seen from Table 1, during 1901, only 10.82 percent of the total population belonged to 'urban centres and even that was reduced to 10.27 percent in next decade. Afterwards, the process of urbanization has been high as the percentage of urban population reached a level of 25.69 percent in 1991 and again reached to 27.78 percentages in 2001.

Table 1
Growth of Urban Population

Census years	Population (Million)	Decadel Growth Rate of Population	Total Urban Population	% of Urban Population to Total Population	Decadal Growth of Urban Population
1901	238.40	-	25.8	10.82	-
1911	252.09	5.74	25.9	10.27	0.39
1921	252.32	0.09	28.1	11.14	8.49
1931	278.98	10.57	33.5	12.01	19.22
1941	318.16	14.04	44.2	13.89	31.94
1951	361.09	13.49	62.4	17.28	41.18
1961	439.23	21.64	78.9	17.96	26.44
1971	548.16	24.80	109.1	19.90	38.28

1981	683.33	24.66	159.3	23.31	46.01
1991	846.39	23.86	217.42	25.69	36.48
2001	1027.02	21.34	285.35	27.78	31.24

Source: Population Census, 2001.

Apart from the concentration of urban population, the trend in its growth rate by passes the overall growth trends. From 1921 to 2001, the growth rate of urban population went over and above the total population growth. During the period, the growth of urban population and urban population increased from 0.39 percent to 31.24 percent respectively during the period of the study. The growth rate in urban population as well as the net migration from the rural areas. The net migration from rural to urban areas is the concomitant of rapid growth and expansion of industrial and service sectors in urban areas.

5. Cause of Urbanization .

There are many reason for growth urbanization in India. Again, it varies froin one urban centre to another. Migration of the rural populace to urban centres in search of better livelihood prospects is one of the important reasons and noteworthy feature of India's urbanization trend. Employment oppurtunities in the urban formal sector, which protected employment for certain labour, is what attracts the villagers. But, the limited prospects of the sector pushes majority of them into the hard core of informal sector characterized by unorganized small-scale business ventures operated with skills acquired outside the formal school system. Urban conglomerations in most cases have their own limitations in affording the migrant villagers. The flows towards urbanization coupled with the restrictive absorbtion power of formal sector; is no way matches with the mass migration of skilled and unskilled labour from the rural areas. Development of villages is hindered by this exodus of productive labour that could have been utilized for integrated development of the rural region. The sad paradox is that neither the urban ventures are able to provide substantial livelihood to maj ority of rural migrants nor the villages are benefited with the underemployed urban settlers. Urbanization, which is viewed as an index of industrialization and economic development, is certainly attracting more people towards better employment opportunities. The magnitude and migration is also evident from the rapid growth of urban population. (J ayan, K.N and Sadanandan, Sindhu 2003).

6. Impact of Urbanization on Various Fronts and Environmental Impacts of Urbanization Some of the chief forces driving urbanization today are shifting of jobs from agriculture to industry and the concentration of economy opprotunities in the urban areas. Urbanization is associated with higher incomes, improved health, higher literacy, improved quality of life and other benefits .Yet along with the benefits of urbanization come environmental and social ills. Since with Urbanization the concentration of people is increasing in cities so is the demands for basic nescessities like food, energy, drinking water and shelter. The result is in terms of poor quality housing, lack of water supply and sanitation facility and lack of proper waste disposal facility leading to spread of communicable diseases. . Urbanization affects the environment in three majors ways: implication due to urban poverty which is result of migration, stressed infrastructure and management systems and finally increasing consumerism. These problems warrant major concerns on three accounts. Firstly the prevailing pattern and trend of urbanization is more material and energy intensive. Secondly the discharge of pollutants and generation of soil waste in cities is particularly

harmful because it is uncontrollable and thirdly the financial, institutional, technological and infrastructure systems available for help to control these problems in the region at present are inadequate .

6.1 Urban Waste

Increasing urbanization is resulting in the generation of the increasing amounts of soil waste. It is estimated that 20-50 percent of the solid waste generated remains uncollected. In New Delhi, 3,880 tons of garbage is produced per day, yet only 2,420 tons are collected for disposal. Even if collected, municipal solid waste remains problems in many cities. As the living standards are rising the organic content in the waste is reducing and non-biodegradable wastes like metal, plastic and glass are on a rise. Urbanization and increasing trend of consumerism in the cities are the main factors leading to generation of more waste. In India, nearly 1, 15000 metric tons of municipal waste are generated every day (RT, 2008) .

6.2 Urban Transportation

Transportation systems are major contributor to the decay of urban environment and reduced quality of life in the metropolitan areas due to their contribution to atmospheric emissions, noise and risk of accidents. Increasing vehicular pollution in major urban centres is becoming an area of growing concern. Poor maintenance of vehicles degraded condition of roads and use of un pure fuels primarily precipitate the problems of air and noise pollution arising from operation of motorized vehicles .

6.3 Urban Air Quality

Urban air quality has deteriorated largely on account of growth in industrial activity, transportation needs and energy production. In India, ambient air quality status derived from a network of 290 stations covering 90 towns cities in recent year indicates that while suspended particular matter (SPM) is consistently critical in many cities, the concentration of nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide is also increasing and is already transiting from moderate to high to critical levels. As estimated, 2000 metric tons of air pollutants are emitted into the atmosphere everyday, vehicular sources contributing the maximum.

6.4 Energy Demand

Urbanization has profound effect on the amount and types of energy consumed. Along with population growth, economic development and industrialization, urbanization is one of the principal forces driving the increase in energy demand. Although the traditional rural societies rely heavily upon the human and animal energy and on nearby wood or fuel, today urban societies are characterized by their reliance on fossil fuels and electricity. These patterns of energy use lead to different environmental impacts (Kumar, Dharendra, 2001).

6.5 Water Demand

India although has enormous reserve of water, but it still suffers from urban water supply problems. The growing demand of water, along with poor water resources management and mounting pollution levels contributes to water supply problems in and around cities. Urbanization is leading to change in life style and consumption pattern, which is leading to increased demand for water. As number of people in urban area increases, so does the demand for food and hence for irrigation in agricultural areas close to cities. This pressure can quickly result in demand for water that surpasses the local water supply. Poor water management practices exacerbates local water shortages, inefficient water distribution system is another major source of water loss. Water scarcity is closely link with water quality. Fresh water lakes and rivers provide affordable and easy accessible water, but uncontrolled discharges of domestic sewage and industrial effluents has left many urban rivers heavily polluted and their water is unsafe for

use. Already struggling with uneven distribution of water resources and local water scarcity, the total water demand is projected to double by 2015 in India .

6.6 Urban Water Crisis

The over-exploitation of the ground water has often led to the deepening of the water table in addition to creating acute water problems in many urban centres. Ground water levels have plunged in 206 districts in India. States like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka and Punjab face major water scarcity in urban India. Demand for water exceeds the supply due to increase in urban population growth. Tamil Nadu Public Works Department recently declared that in 14 Districts of the state ground water is not available even in bore wells as deep as 300-400 feet. This is due to sinking of thousands of bore wells in Dindigul District (TN) has discovered that water discharges from the from the tanneries, which is drawn from 350 out of 367 wells have become unusable because of discharge of tannery effluents. In Kerala, studies conducted by the Centre of Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) show that a large number of house-compound wells in the state are drying up, affecting at least 15 lakh people have no assured water supply. More than 70 percent of the state population gets drinking water from house wells and only 30 percent depends on Government sponsored piped water supply schemes. In the context, water scarcity is one of the major problems today both in rural and urban areas (Mukundan, 2005).

7. Basic Features and Patterns of India's Urbanization

Basic features of urbanization in India can be highlighted as:

- Lopsided urbanization induces growth of class 1 cities
- Urbanization occurs without industrialization and strong economic base
- Urbanization is mainly a product of demographic explosion occurs and poverty induced rural-urban migration
- Urbanization occurs not due to urban due to rural push
- Poor quality of rural-urban migration leads to poor quality urbanization
- Distress migration initiates urban decay

Globalization, liberalization and privatization impacted negative process for urbanization in India. Under globalization survival and existence of the poor are affected adversely. Liberalization permits chip import of goods which ultimately negatively affects rural economy, handicrafts, household industry on which rural poor survives. The benefits of liberalization generally accrue to only those who acquire new skills. It is unlikely that common man and the poor will benefit from the liberalization. Privatization causes retrenchment of workers (Pranati Datta, 2006). All these negative syndrome forces poverty induced migration of rural poor to urban informal sectors. Hence migration which is one of the components. of urban growth occurs not due to urban pull but due to rural push.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Over the last few decades, the government of India has adopted many explicit population distribution policies and programmes to decongest urban areas and facilitate a more balanced spatial development. Government should also take effective steps implement the following rural development programmes to reduce the rural-urban migrations. If the rural migration is checked then the crowding in the urban areas would be lessened to a great extent (Chelladurai, 2009). The important rural development

programmes which are worth mentioning are such as Training Rural Youth for self-employment, Interagal Rural Development Programme. Hill Area Development Project, Tribal Development Project, Food for Work Programme, National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme etc. These should be properly implemented to reach the benefit to the stakeholders so that they need not to migrate to the urban areas as they get employment in their localities as sources of livelihood. Apart from these various other strategies for development like urban planning and development is the need of hour such as balanced regional and urban planning, development of strong economic base urban economy, urban planning and housing for slum people with human face. If these types of programmes are implemented properly then developed in urban areas would be in a systematic manner without hampering other aspects of development processes.

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