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Rising Urbanisation in India: Problems and Challenges for Urban Development

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INTRODUCTION

URBANISATION IS a "process which reveals itself through temporal, spatial and sectoral changes in the demographic, social, economic, technological and environmental aspects of life in a given society."Research into the process of urbanisation was first undertaken by the United Nations in 1948. In this study the data pertaining to urban-rural population of 58 countries was provided by the United Nations. The dynamic nature of urbanisation is evident from terms like 'level', 'tempo' or 'degree' of urbanisation. These terms indicate the relative and continuum facets of the urbanisation processes. The concept of urbanisation has also been referred to two quite distinct process. According to John Friedman, "On the one hand, it refers to growth of towns, cities and metropolis in their local functional and sociological matrices representing the various kinds of settlements patterns and on the other, the growth of socio-cultural systems or the development of an urbanizing society.[1]

Urbanisation is not a product, it is a process by which people, instead of living in predominantly dispersed agricultural villages, start living in towns and cities dominated by industrial and service function. It involves multiplication of urban places and/or an increase in the size of existing cities growth.[2]

In the context of the Third world urbanisation, two almost diametrically opposite views have usually been expressed. One primarily argues that the rate of urbanisation in these countries has been much higher than what the present day developed countries experienced during their historical growth process, over urbanisation view, (Loselitz: 1955, 1957, Bairoch). In contrast, the other view maintains that the Third world urbanisation experience has not been very different by historical standards. The urbanisation process relates to concentration of people engaged in non-agricultural occupations and concentration of non-agricultural land uses in a specialized area,

a 'place' as a consequence of population, occupational and land use shifts. Urbanisation thus involves:

(a) Concentration of people at population densities higher than those associated with agricultural populations with only very rare exceptions on either side;

(b) Population shifts (migration) from rural to urban areas;

(c) Occupational shift from agricultural to non-agricultural.

(d) Land use shift from agricultural to non-agricultural.[3]

Urbanisation in Independent India

The real thrust of urbanisation in India has occurred only in post-independence era after the advent of planning and industrialisation. Urbanisation in Independent India is taking place at a much faster rate than the expansion of infrastructure and service. In 1951, at the starting point of planned economic development, the level of urbanisation was 17.29 per cent with 62.45 million urban populations. The urban population of India increased from 25.8 million in 1901 to 377.1 million in 2011, i.e., more than fiften-fold increase has occurred in the urban population of India during this period whereas the increase in the total population of India had been less than five times.

Significance of urban local government in India has considerably increased in the post-independence era with the inauguration of the constitution embodying the principles of democracy and a welfare state and emphasizing upon the government in urban areas to promote social and economic development. During the post-independence period, India has urbanized at faster rate up to 1981, while during 1981-1991 and 1991-2001 decade, the rate has slowed down. 264.9 million persons, constituting 70 per cent of the total urban population, live in class I Urban Agglowerations/Towns. The proportion has increased considerably over the last census. In the remaining classes of towns the growth has been nominal.

Trend and Level of Urbanisation

Urban growth in India is mainly based on:

(a) Natural growth of population

(b) rural to urban migration

(c) Re-classification of rural areas as urban, done from time to time, as in 1901.

Table 1 shows the trend of urbanisation in India during 1921-2011. The rate of urbanisation varies over time and space. In the earlier part of this century, the level of urbanisation was only 10.84 per cent with only 25.85 million people in 1827 towns. In 1951, at the starting point of planned economic development, the level was 17.29 per cent with 62.45 million urban population. The 2011 population census has recorded 377.1 million urban population which accounts for 31.16 per cent of 1210.2 million total population, distributed over 7935 urban agglomerations/towns.

During the post-independence period, India has urbanised at fast rate up to 1981 while during 1981-1991 and 1991-2001 decade, the rate has slowed down. In 2001 and 2011, even though the extent of urbanisation is low at 27.78 per cent and 31.16 per cent, respectively, the magnitude of urban population of 285.35 million and 377.1 million, respectively is very high, while the percentage of population living in urban areas has increased from 27.78 in 2001 to 31.16 in 2011.

The urbanisation during 1901-2011 reveals that:

1. The proportion of urban population and the total number of urban agglomerations has been increasing decade after decade.
2. There is a steady rise in the total number of urban agglomerations/towns after 1961.
3. The country's urban population has increased by little over fiften times.

The trends in urbanisation show that while the total urban population increased fiften folds between 2001 and 2011, the number of urban settlements approximately trebled. Urbanisation in India has been relatively slow compared to many developing countries.

The annual growth rate of urban population during 1981-1991 was 3.03 per cent, as against 3.83 per cent during 1971-1981 and 3.21 per cent during 1961-1971.

Urbanising Regions / States

In India the highly urbanising states are Tamil Nadu (48.45%), Kerala (47.72%), Maharashtra (45.23%), Punjab (44.80%), Gujarat (42.6%), Karnataka (38.57%), West Bengal (31.89%), Haryana (34.79%), Andhra Pradesh (33.49%) and are also urbanised states. The proportion of urban population in these states is higher than the national average of 31.16 per cent. Most of million plus cities and India's important

TABLE 1. POPULATION AND ITS GROWTH, INDIA: 1921-2011

Census Years	*Population*	*Decadal growth*		*Change in decadal growth*		*Average annual exponential growth rate (%)*	*Progressive growth rate over 1901 (%)*
		Absolute	*Per cent*	*Absolute*	*Per cent*		
1921	25,13,21,213	-7,72,177	(0.31)	-14469240	-6.05	-0.03	5.42
1931	27,89,77,238	2,76,56,025	11.00	28428202	11.31	1.04	17.02
1941	31,86,60,580	3,96,83,342	14.22	12027317	3.22	1.33	33.67
1951	36,10,88,090	4,24,27,510	13.31	2744168	-0.91	1.25	51.47
1961	43,92,34,771	7,81,46,681	21.64	35719171	8.33	1.96	84.25
1971	54,81,59,652	10,89,24,881	24.80	30778200	3.16	2.20	129.94
1981	68,33,29,097	13,51,69,445	24.66	26244564	-0.14	2.22	186.64
1991	84,64,21,039	16,30,91,942	23.87	2,79,22,497	17.12	2.16	255.05
2001	1,02,87,37,436	18,23,16,397	21.54	1,92,24,455	10.54	1.97	331.52
2011	1,21,01,93,422	18,14,55,986	17.64	-8,60,411	-0.47	1.64	407.64

industrial-commercial financial centres and port towns are located in these states which are developed or advanced states of India.

The Madhya Pradesh (27.63%), Rajasthan (24.89%), Uttar Pradesh (22.28%), Orissa (16.68%), Assam (14.08%) and Bihar (10.47%) are low urbanising states where the proportion of urban population to total population is less than national average (31.16%). These states are industrially/commercially and agriculturally backward. Delhi (97.50%) and Chandigarh (97.25%) are most urbanised whereas Dadra-Nagar Haveli (8.47%) and Himachal Pradesh (10.04%) are least urbanised (Table 3).

Growth and Trend of Cities

In India, urban population are concentrated in large cities and towns. The 1971 Census introduced the term urban agglomeration, which includes the suburban outgrowths of a particular town with that town itself. This concept enables us to compare more effectively the sprawl of different urban centres especially the spread of large cities into their adjoining areas. (S.K. Misra and V.K. Puri, Indian Economy - Its Development Experience, Himalaya Publishing House, Mumbai, 2001).

The most striking features of the urbanisation in India are the size and spread with which cities are grouping to metropolitan and mega city status. The metropolitan cities are making vital contributions to economic growth by performing crucial service and production functions. Attempts to control the growth of large metropolitan cities have been unsuccessful because these cities continue to perform crucial economic functions.

In 1971, there was only one metropolitan city, namely Calcutta. In 1951, their number increased to five, in 1981 their number stood at 12. The number of metropolitan cities almost doubled during 1991-2001, which were 23. In 2011, the number of metropolitan cities became 50. These 50 metropolises are widely scattered in all major states of India. As per Census 2011, 264.9 million persons, constituting 70 per cent of the total urban population live in class I UAs/towns. The proportion has increased considerably over the last census. In the remaining classes of towns the growth has been nominal. Over a period of four decades 1971 to 2011, the population of most of the million plus agglomerations has doubled.

Nature, Scope and Significance of Urban Development

Urban development takes into account planned development action with concerted efforts of land acquisition, its development and its disposal for various usage, slum clearance and rehabilitation of inhabitants, provision of social and economic infrastructure with a quality of working and living environment in the urbanised area, it provides the best opportunity to men and women to bring their local knowledge and enthusiasm to bear on the situation of their own peculiar problems. Urban local government helps in reduction in the burden on Central Government, as channel of communication between the state government and the community, as solution of local problems in an effective manner.

In India, urban development is a state subject. The Ministry of Urban Development assists state government in their programmes of urban development by way of formulating broad policy framework; providing legislation support by way of constitutional amendment; legislation or issue of guidelines; implementing a number of centrally sponsored schemes, processing monitoring assistance from multilateral/bilateral institutions for state government projects; and finally providing technical support and advice for promoting orderly urbanisation.[4]

Urbanisation in India has shown its phenomenal growth during post-independence years because of pressure of fast growing population, rapid industrialisation, rural to urban migration and the growing tempo of modernization. As a result new towns are coming up, already existing commercial and industrial towns are expanding to accommodate the continuing influx of the rural population. Thus the census figure of 11 per cent of Indian urban population in 1901 had shown a marked increase of 31.16 per cent in 2011. The significance of urbanisation in India has considerably increased in the post independence era with the inauguration of the constitution embodying the principles of democracy and a welfare state and emphasizing upon the governments in urban areas to promote social and economic development.

Indian cities have been centres of great human enterprise and cultural activity. Cities have to be viewed as centres of social and cultural diversity and varied opportunities. The future of urbanisation in India should be seen in the context of economic growth and social justice. Sustainability of urban development has to be based on production and enhancement of both natural and human resources. The various stakeholders in the urban scenario are working for

TABLE 3. INDIAN MAJOR METRO CITIES WITH MORE THAN SIX MILLION INHABITANTS IN 2011

	1981	*1991*	*2001*	*2011*	*Area km sq Density*	*2001*	*Growth rate 1991-2001*	*2001-2011*
Delhi	5783247	12143815	17446006	25291164	1413	12347	369	378
Kolkata	9194199	12682197	16181500	20678331	1872	8644	247	248
Mumbai	9421999	11348168	14697085	19838979	472	31138	262	306
Chennai	4289518	5737127	6931767	8813802	587	11809	191	243
Hyderabad	2562417	4383904	5913737	8107694	522	11329	304	321
Bangalore	2921676	4692248	585084	7762115	533	10976	223	287
Pune	1686127	2297258	3910333	6006239	371	10541	546	438
Ahmedabad	2557511	3809634	4552326	6036272	237	19208	180	286

developing new partnerships. Urban development can be better achieved if cities and human settlements are planned, developed and improved in accordance with sound economic, social, cultural and environmental principles.

Problems and Challenges of Urbanisation

The rapidly growing size of urban population and its concentration in a few cities is posing serious problems in the management of urban services. The growth of urban agglomerations creates several problems of planning, coordination and development of civic amenities. Urbanisation in India is taking place sans adequate industrialisation, infrastructure and urban services but with the serious accompanied problems connected with services, housing and environment. The level of basic services and amenities has not kept pace with the rising level of urbanisation. The accessibility of facilities such as potable drinking water, regular electric supply, medical and health facilities, education, etc. has deteriorated over time. The level of civic services in India is among the lowest in the world.

Attention currently provided to urban areas is grossly inadequate. In view of Ashish Bose, "The government's housing policy continues to be colonial, the urban land policy continues to be capitalist, the town planning and municipal rules and regulations continue to be based on obsolete 19th century and early 20th century British legislation, and the system of city government breeding in efficiency, corruption and nepotism is certainly not to meet the challenges of urbanisation in the close decades of the 20th century. In the absence of any structural change in the urban situation, the only futuristic projection one encounters are the doomsday projections of exploding population and worsening environment, rising unemployment, increasing housing shortages, growing bankruptcy and collapse of urban infrastructure, in short increasing per capita misery."[5]

The services required to support large concentration of population are lagging far behind the pace of urbanisation. Even the infrastructural facilities are not proper. S.L. Kaushik is of the view that, "An accelerated trend of urbanisation has brought in its wake numerous formidable and complicated problems of habitation and a new social structure with divergent civil and social needs, thereby changing the agriculture and rural based socio-economic set-up to an urban industry oriented social structure. A plethora of multi-dimensional problems posed by rapid growth of urbanisation includes lack of community service, environmental and social facilities, mushrooming growth of

slums, depletion of standards of health and sanitation, suffocating air pollution, dismal failure of public utility services, serious housing problems and traffic jams.[6]

All cities in the country have severe shortage of housing, water supply, sewerage, transportation, communication and other facilities. Dr. Kulwant Singh and Florian Steinberg are of the view that "India's urban future poses an unprecedented challenge for planners and city managers. As the country enters an era of economic growth, economic liberalisation and prosperity, the cities seem not yet ready to accommodate the growing population to provide work and services and environmental infrastructure for all, and access to critical inputs of land, affordable finance, and construction technologies need to be resolved. In particular infrastructure for economic growth is lacking very badly while India cannot afford to embark on this road to economic growth and liberalisation while here cities remain in squalor, quality of urban life declines and a permanent sanitation and environmental crisis hampers the economic development efforts.[7]

The growth of urban agglomeration creates several problems of over concentration of population, problems of planning, coordination and developments of civic amenities. Urbanisation requires a health of local government but it is made difficult by the explosive problems of urban areas. The unplanned and unbalanced urban growth is leading to inter-regional imbalance, rural-urban divide, springing up of large slums, environmental pollution. It is also leading to social tension, depletion of resources, etc. Haphazard growth of city leads to chaos, disorder and conflicts.

Urban area particularly metropolitan and large cities symbolise poverty, slums, polluted environment. The metropolitan cities are bursting at their seams, while the small and medium towns are languishing. Metropolitan and large cities are crowded and congested as population densities are high and the land-man ratios extremely low. According to Girish K. Mishra, "Unsustainable urban development has also been the bane of urbanisation in our country arising out of inappropriate technologies, outmoded and outdated regulatory measures, lack of foresight and comprehensive perspective of development, conservation of indigenous resources, ecological imbalance and destruction of nature.[8]

The tardy and uneven process of urbanisation has resulted in congestion and deterioration of public utility services like housing, public health, transportation, energy, etc.

It must be noted that, "there is no city in India today where the provision of houses, water, sewerage, electricity, transport, schools, hospitals and all other ingredients of urban infrastructure, can be considered adequate and unless economic development in India succeeds in creating at least the minimum urban infrastructure in the decades to come, urbanisation will, pose a serious threat to the political stability of the country.[9] The urban population has uneven distribution as between the different regions or states and also as between cities and towns. The tendency has been for larger proportionate increase of population in the bigger cities and towns.

CONCLUSION

Since population is too much for the urban areas, it has led to the emergence of unemployment, slums, restlessness in educational institutions, violence, etc. The present pace of urbanisation in India is comparatively low which is likely to increase vary sharply with industrialisation and economic development as happened in most of the developed countries, where overwhelming majority of population, i.e. over 80 per cent in many countries, lives in urban areas. Presently there is no national urban development policy nor as a corollary a state urban development policy. There is no balance in the distribution of economic activities. There is excessive concentration of economic activities, mainly industries, in a few urban centres particularly in large cities. Small and medium towns have not attracted industries to be located there.

Urban areas particularly big cities have to be viewed as centres of social and cultural diversity and varied opportunities. According to R. Ramchandran, "The macro-spatial patterns of urbanisation in India reveal the spatial overlapping of different levels of urbanisation with the patterns of axial development, clustering and urban dispersal. The force that has led to this overlapping of spatial patterns is not as yet fully understood. The Indian urban scene is a mosaic of the complex and the simple, of the ancient and the recent, juxtaposed on a variable physical landscape of plains, plateaus and hills coastal and riverine channels and transport arteries through urban nodes divides and unite these territories. As the urban Kaleidoscope is turned, new facets and forms are revealed and the underlying reality emerges with its contradictions, new relations, and historical paradoxes.

Future Projections of Urbanisation in India

1. As per World Bank study by the year 2030, India's urban

population is likely to increase to 716.0 million, i.e. about 330 per cent of the present urban population (285.35 million in 2001) by 2030.

2. The urban population of India is expected to grow from 27.7 per cent at present to 35 per cent of the total population by the year 2016. In absolute terms, the present urban population of 285.35 million will grow to 501 million.
3. The UN has projected that by 2025 more than 50 per cent of the country's population will live in cities and towns.
4. The number of cities and towns would increase to 5000 by 2021.
5. The number of million plus cities is projected to increase upto 70 by 2021.
6. There will be 40 metro cities in the country in 2001 as against 35 in 2001.

Urbanisation in India during 1981-1991 and 1991-2001 was slow than earlier periods. "Certainly slowing of urbanisation does not imply the absence of the growth of new industries and expansion of trade and commerce, it implies instead the raising capital intensiveness and adoption of modern technology leading to generation of less number of jobs on one hand and the limited scope that exists in the urban informal sector to absorb more of rural sector.[10] Despite high population increase in India, the level of urbanisation has not risen to a high level. India is still predominantly rural and agricultural in character with a low level of urbanisation but in terms of total numbers, the quantum of urban population is staggeringly very high with a very high urban growth. Despite the predominant rural nature of the Indian economy, there has been a fast trend towards urbanisation."[11] We find that the trend towards urbanisation has been far indeed with big towns growing more rapidly.

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