

## **A Study on Urbanization in India: Current Challenges and Issues**

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### **Abstract**

*Urbanization is a process of society's transformation from a predominantly rural to a predominately urban population. People move to urban areas in search of better job opportunities, health facilities, education, better growth and development of life, etc. Urbanization in India began to accelerate after independence, due to the country's adoption of a mixed economy, which gave rise to the development of the private sector and it is taking place at a faster rate in India. Economy residing in urban areas in India, according to 1901 census, was 11.4%. This count increased to 28.53% according to 2001 census, and crossing 30% as per 2011 census, standing at 31.16%. According to a survey by UN State of the World Population report in 2007, by 2030, 40.76% of country's population is expected to reside in urban areas. As per World Bank, India, along with China, Indonesia, Nigeria, and the United States, will lead the world's urban population surge by 2050. Rapid rise in urban population, in India, is leading to many problems like increasing slums, unemployment, transportation, sewage problems, water difficulties, higher rates of crime, housing, infrastructure, resources, pollution, politics, health hazards, etc. decrease in standard of living in urban areas, also causing environmental damage hence the present study assess and highlight on all the issues and challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century urbanization. The findings shows that urbanization is not a problem in itself, but unsustainable and unplanned of it is bound to create socio, economic, political, etc. problems and are need to be countered in a planned and scientific manner. Urbanization is good for financial growth of any nation but careful planning, administration, etc. is required to develop cities, towns, etc. and offer basic amenities for healthy and successful life.*

**Keywords:** Amenities, Challenges, Economy, Finance, Health, Issues, Population, Urbanization

### **Introduction**

Urban areas have been recognized as engines of inclusive economic growth and of the 121 crores Indians, 83.3 crores live in rural areas while 37.7 crores stay in urban areas, that is approximately 32 % of the population according to the census of India, 2011. All the places which have municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee and all the other places which satisfy that a minimum population of 5000 persons, at least 75 % of male main working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits and a density of population of at least 400 persons per square kilometer The first category of urban units are known as statutory town and are notified under law

by respective State/UT government and have local bodies like municipal corporation, municipality, etc, irrespective of demographic characteristics.

### Objectives

- ❖ Urbanization and its history in India
- ❖ Infrastructural and negative challenges in urbanization
- ❖ Urbanization in India and its current problems and Issues

### Methodology

The study has been conducted based on the method of document review in accordance with the qualitative approach of research and has been done on the basis of the secondary sources of data like books, research journals, etc. towards “A Study on Urbanization in India: Current Challenges and Issues”

**Urban Agglomeration (UA):** An urban agglomeration is a continuous urban spread constituting a town and its adjoining outgrowths (OGs), or two or more physically contiguous towns together with or without outgrowths of such towns. An Urban Agglomeration must consist of at least a statutory town and its total population that is all the constituents put together should not be less than 20,000 as per the 2001 census. In varying local conditions, there were similar other combinations which have been treated as urban agglomerations satisfying the basic condition of contiguity like greater Mumbai.

**Out Growths (OG):** It is a viable unit such as a village or a hamlet or an enumeration block made up of such village or hamlet and clearly identifiable in terms of its boundaries and location. Some of the examples are railway colony, university campus, port area, military camps, etc., which have come up near a statutory town outside its statutory limits but within the revenue limits of a village or villages contiguous to the town and while determining the outgrowth of a town, it has been ensured that it possesses the urban features in terms of infrastructure and amenities such as pucca roads, electricity, taps, drainage system for disposal of waste water etc. educational institutions, post offices, medical facilities, banks etc. and physically contiguous with the core town of the UA like Central Railway Colony (OG), Triveni

**Migration:** It is the key process underlying growth of urbanisation; and the process of urbanization is closely related with rural to urban migration of people and in most developing countries of the world where rate of urban growth is relatively higher the urban-ward migration is usually high. Rural to urban migration is by far the major component of urbanisation and is the chief mechanism by which urbanisation trends all the world-over has been accomplished and after independence, urbanization in India is increasing at very high pace, but at the same time there are some problems, which are becoming barriers for balance, equitable and inclusive development.

## Review of Literature

The world urbanization has a level of over 50% (Liddle, 2017) and people recognize that economic growth and urbanization are mutually reinforcing. Economic and other activities transform and shift from rural to urban sectors while urbanization is occurring. The urbanization trend is associated with the concentration of economic activities, production, and productivity. The progressed to high income with urbanization happens in almost country (Turok & Mc Granahan, 2013). Though there were well-spelt policies of urban development throughout the plan period. But there was a kind of reluctance (Ahluwalia et al., 2014 & Tiwari et al., 2015) to accept the need for urban transformation. Lack of explicit constitutional status of cities and towns which people referred as anti-urban bias (Raheja, 1973) and absence of empathy regarding urban issues in the early years of the plan period in India was a kind of residual nationalist legacy of developing villages (Batra, 2012). Some of the major health problems resulting from urbanization include poor nutrition, pollution-related health conditions and communicable diseases, poor sanitation and housing conditions, and related health conditions. These have direct impacts on individual quality of life, while straining public health systems and resources. Urban dwellers also suffer from over nutrition and obesity, a growing global public health problem. Obesity and other lifestyle conditions contribute to chronic diseases (such as cancers, diabetes, and heart diseases). Although obesity is most common among the wealthy, international agencies have noted the emergence of increased weight among the middle class and poor in recent years and it affects poverty through many different channels, for example, migration from rural to urban. This migration comes from the wage gap between urban and rural areas. In addition to rising wages of migrants to cities, remittances from migrants are a factor that alters income and influences rural household consumption, saving, and investment behaviour (Harris & Todaro, 1970; Lewis, 1954; Todaro, 1969). Therefore, migration directly affects household poverty (McKenzie & Sasin, 2007). Cities are also a major contributor to climate change, as they are responsible for around 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions (UNEP). Urban areas also generate considerable amounts of waste, much of which remains poorly managed and becomes hazardous to people's and ecosystems' health and air pollution, which is responsible for 9% of deaths worldwide and many health issues (Ritchie & Roser, 2017), is also a particularly acute problem in cities, due to transportation and production patterns. In a more general sense, urbanization is the concentration of population due to the process of movement and redistribution (Geruson & McGrath, 1977, p. 3). Here movement and redistribution refers to the spatial location and relocation of human population, resources, and industries in a landscape. Growth of city and economy was brought about by the political independence of the U. S., rapid expansion of overall population, development of railroads and rapid spread of automobiles, and the high level of agricultural productivity (Bairoch, 1988). Apart from its ecological or biological services, importance of soil is deeply rooted to the foundation of human civilization through cultural, immaterial, religious and spiritual belief systems (Winiwarter & Blum, 2006). Encroachment of urban land into nearby forested or vegetated areas, and the expansion of built up areas and transportation networks into steeper terrain destabilizing slopes lead to slope failures (Beek, Cammeraat, Andreu, & Mickovski, 2008, p. 18 19).

## **History of Urbanization in India**

In 1687-88, the first municipal corporation in India was set up at Madras. In 1726, Municipal Corporation was set up in Bombay and Calcutta. In 1882, a resolution was passed and according to which, Panchayat were to be formed at village level, district boards, taluq boards and municipalities also came into existence and at that time Lord Ripon was Viceroy of India, and for this Lord Ripon is known as father of local self-government in India and Urbanization since independence has been focused through respective five year plans as follows: First two plan focused on institution and organization building and same was instructed to the states to do. For ex. Delhi development Authority, Town and country planning organization came during this period. Third plan (1961-66) was turning point in urban planning history, as it emphasized on importance of towns and cities in balanced regional development and it advised urban planning to adopt regional approach. It also emphasized the need for urban land regulation, checking of urban land prices, preparation of master plan, etc. Fourth plan (1969-74), continued with the theme of third plan and development plans for 72 urban areas were undertaken. Regional studies in respect of metropolitan regions around Delhi, Mumbai and Calcutta were initiated. During Eighth plan, the Mega city scheme was introduced in 1993-94 covering five mega cities of Mumbai, Calcutta, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Also IDSMT scheme was revamped through its infrastructural development programs for boosting employment generation for diverting migration from big cities to the small and medium towns and the ninth plan, continued with the schemes of the eighth plan and also emphasized on decentralization and financial autonomy of urban local bodies. A new program called Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojna (SJSRY) in 1997 with two sub plans like urban self-employment program and Urban wage employment programme that is targeting for urban poverty reduction and employment. It was decided by central government to revamp SJSRY in 2013 as National urban Livelihood Mission (NULM).

## **Infrastructural Challenges**

**Housing:** Its provision for the growing urban population will be the biggest challenge before the government and the growing cost of houses comparison to the income of the urban middle class, has made it impossible for majority of lower income groups and are residing in congested accommodation and many of those are devoid of proper ventilation, lighting, water supply, sewage system, etc. For instance in Delhi, the current estimate is of a shortage of 5, 00,000 dwelling units the coming decades. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) introduced the concept of “Housing Poverty” which includes “Individuals and households who lack safe, secure and healthy shelter, with basic infrastructure such as piped water and adequate provision for sanitation, drainage and the removal of household waste”.

**Safe Drinking Water:** The safe drinking water sources are also found to be contaminated because of water in the cities are inadequate and in the future, the expected population cannot be accommodated without a drastic improvement in the availability of water. The expenses on water treatment and reuse will grow manifold.

**Sanitation:** The poor sanitation condition is another gloomy feature in urban areas and particularly in slums and unauthorized colonies of urban areas and the drainage system in many unorganized colonies and slums are either not existing and if existing are in a bad shape and in bits resulting in blockage of waste water and unsanitary conditions lead to many sanitation related diseases such as diarrhoea and malaria. Unsafe garbage disposal is one of the critical problems in urban areas and garbage management always remained a major challenge.

**Health conditions:** The National Family Health Survey, 2006-07 has envisaged that a lot of women and children are suffering from nutritional anaemia and diseases like tuberculosis and asthma are occurring in good number and providing health care services to the growing urban population is major challenge before the government health care delivery system.

**Urban Public Transport:** As high income individual are buying more private vehicle and use less public transport and huge number of vehicles in cities is causing more traffic jam, which in turn decreases the efficiency of public transport. Also the penetration of public transport is less, which make people use private vehicle and public transport.

### Major Findings

- ❖ More than half of unemployed youths live in metropolitan cities around the globe, and the percentage is even higher among educated people.
- ❖ Obesity is caused by increased caloric intake and decreased physical activity, something historically associated with wealth.
- ❖ However, people in urbanized areas of developing countries are also now vulnerable to obesity due to lack of physical space, continually sitting in workplaces, and excessive energy intake and low energy expenditure.
- ❖ Inadequate sanitation can lead to the transmission of helminths and other intestinal parasites.
- ❖ Population pressure on arable land contributes to the land degradation.
- ❖ The increasing population numbers and growing affluence have already resulted in rapid growth of energy production and consumption in India.
- ❖ The environmental effects like ground water and surface water contamination; air pollution and global warming are of growing concern owing to increasing consumption levels.
- ❖ Waste generation has observed cumulative trend equivalent to the development of urbanization and industrialization.
- ❖ This problem has become one of the primary urban environmental issues.
- ❖ A huge amount of waste is produced daily, and its management is an enormous task.
- ❖ The rapid increase in urbanization combines with anxious poverty to deplete and pollute local resource basis on which the livelihood of the present and future generation depends.
- ❖ The major effect of the urbanization on the environment is major increase in green house gasses.

- ❖ The concentration of Greenhouse gasses (GHG's) in the atmosphere has increased rapidly due to anthropogenic activities attached with the urbanization growth and resulting in an irrelevant increase in the temperature of the earth.
- ❖ Inadequate drinking water and sanitation infrastructure exacerbate health risks in urban centres.
- ❖ Urban residents tend to have better access to water-related services than their rural counterparts, but much of the population growth is in slums, where inhabitants are confronted with limited local water availability and high costs of water relative to income (Dill and Crow 2014).
- ❖ Many urban cities have seen a population explosion that can be hard to plan for.
- ❖ As a result, employment opportunities may dry up quicker than expected leading to unemployment.
- ❖ Housing problems may arise with a very high population density and can lead to poor housing conditions.
- ❖ Unemployment and poor housing is creating an influx of crime in urban cities as well. As it stands today, urbanization has several major drawbacks.
- ❖ Commerce and trade play a major role in urbanization.
- ❖ When more people move to towns and cities, one of the major challenges posed is in the transport system.
- ❖ More people mean an increased number of vehicles which leads to traffic congestion and vehicular pollution.
- ❖ Urbanization leads to improved social integration.
- ❖ Urban cities accommodate everyone without distinguishing them on then above factors.
- ❖ The city areas have more variety of choices for education, such as public and private schools.
- ❖ Urbanization allows for schools to have plenty of teachers to educate students.

### **Negative Effects of Urbanization**

- ❖ When a lot of people move to one single city, then it will definitely make the place overcrowded. Besides commutation, housing also becomes a struggle in such a case.
- ❖ Due to less residential space and growing demands, the price of property starts to increase. Rent rate becomes high and competition becomes unmanageable.
- ❖ The outcome is that people fail to afford to live in urban cities.
- ❖ The problem of joblessness is highest in urban areas and it is even higher among educated people.
- ❖ The increasing relocation of people from rural or developing areas to urban areas is the leading cause of urban unemployment.
- ❖ Another major disadvantage of urbanization is that people have to resort to criminal activities.
- ❖ Poverty is the cause for crime rise and what leads to poverty is unemployment.
- ❖ Schools in rural areas don't have as many teachers because they aren't willing to teach.

- ❖ They would prefer to teach in schools in the city, leaving the schools understaffed and the children without many teachers.
- ❖ In addition to public and private schools, cities also have better colleges and universities.
- ❖ The schools have plenty of courses to choose from, so the students will pursue careers in their desired fields.
- ❖ Cities have better security than the country because police are available to patrol the area 24 hours a day.
- ❖ The communication is better, allowing the police to get to you faster.
- ❖ The dispatchers have more access to technology to help the police get to you.
- ❖ As human development fragments habitat, and leaves wildlife with no place to go, there has been an increase in human-wildlife conflict.
- ❖ Wildlife are hit by vehicles, birds and insects hit windows on cars and buildings and are killed, and sometimes wildlife come into human communities looking for food and other resources that they need to survive.
- ❖ Wildlife may be killed if they exhibit aggression/prey on pets or livestock.
- ❖ Only a few select hardy species can ultimately adapt and survive in an urban area and in such constant proximity to humans.

### **Suggestions**

- ❖ Combat poverty by promoting economic development and job creation. Involve local community in local government
- ❖ Reduce air pollution by upgrading energy use and alternative transport systems.
- ❖ Create private-public partnerships to provide services such as waste disposal and housing.
- ❖ Plant trees and incorporate the care of city green spaces as a key element in urban planning.

### **Conclusion**

Meeting the needs of India's soaring urban populations is and will continue to be a strategic policy matter for various national, state and city governments and promoting an efficient urbanization process in India will require a set of policies that will deal with land policies and basic needs, connective infrastructure and specific interventions. India also needs well managed cities with high quality services. Water supply and sanitation, urban transport and urban drainage are key local services to ensure the quality of living and sustained growth. Sustained energy supply, and affordable serviced land are services that are essential for the development of the economy. In order to make policies effective, a part from making people aware of environmental concerns, educational policies play a vital role in bringing environmental awareness through setting up of appropriate curricula, syllabi, etc. further, we need to develop a strong database on environmental issues, which our policy framers mostly lack. Time series data in this regard is mostly a dream even policy formulation and their effective implementation, can be achieved when there will be cooperation and coordination between departments/agencies.

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