

Urbanisation in India

Neha Bandral

Research Scholar, Deptt. of Economics, University of Jammu (J&K)

Abstract: The process of economic liberalization and associated structural reform would accelerate rural-urban migration and boost the pace of urbanization. Urbanization is an index of transformation from traditional rural economies to modern industrial. The pace of urbanization is now set to speed up as the country sets to a more rapid growth. Urban India today's is distributed in shape – with a diverse range of large and small spread extensively around the nation. India will probably continue as a path of distributed model of urbanization because this suits.

As the urban population and income increases, demand for every key service such as water, transportation, sewage treatment, low income etc. will increase. India needs to work as several areas to manage its urbanization. This paper endeavors to illuminate the process of urbanization in India with emphasis on level, pattern and trends.

Keywords: Urbanization, Trend, Pattern.

1. INTRODUCTION

India has been predominately rural in character throughout in ages, though a few urban centers have flourished from time to time. Urban population of India has increased from 25.8 million in 1901 to 285.4 million in 2001, showing more than 10 fold increase in total urban population.

In the present time, India in the vanguard of a wave of urban expansion. Urbanization is considered to be an inevitable part of economic development. It has been viewed as an important actor in the area of economic transformation. It is a long term continuous process.

The rest paper is organized as follows: Section 1.1 explains the pattern of Urbanisation process in India. Section 1.2 analyze the overall trend of Urbanisation during the decades along with state-wise variations. Section 1.3 throws light on certain challenges occurs due to Urbanization and Section 1.4 concludes the paper with policy implications.

Section 1.1 PATTERN OF URBANISATION IN INDIA

Decadal census is the only source that gives information about the population and its rural and urban settlements. Census of India 1981, 1991, 2001 classifies the urban centres into six categories based on the population size shown below.

Class I Greater than 100, 000 population

Class II 50, 000- 99, 999 population
 Class III 20, 000- 49, 999 population
 Class IV 10, 000- 19, 999 population
 Class V 5000- 10, 000 population
 Class VI Less than 5000 population

**Table No. 1 Pattern of Urban population by size classes
 Percentage of Urban Population by Class Size**

Census Years	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1911	27.4	10.5	16.4	19.7	19.3	6.5
1921	29.7	10.3	15.9	18.2	18.6	7.0
1931	31.2	11.6	16.8	18.0	17.1	5.2
1941	38.2	11.4	16.3	15.7	15.0	3.1
1951	44.6	9.9	15.7	13.6	12.9	3.1
1961	51.4	11.2	16.9	12.7	6.8	0.7
1971	57.2	10.9	16.0	10.9	4.4	0.4
1981	60.3	11.6	14.3	9.5	3.5	0.5
1991	65.2	10.9	13.1	7.7	2.6	0.3
2001	68.6	9.67	12.2	6.8	2.3	0.2

Source: *Census of India, Govt. of India*

Table-1 shows the percentage of urban population by size class of cities during 1911-2001. The pattern of urbanization in India is characterized by continuous concentration of population and activities in big cities. During the years, it is found that there has been a nonstop concentration of population in mega cities and decline in medium and small towns and cities. It is observable that number of cities by size class has increased in all categories except class VI. The share of all other cities except class I cities, has decreased especially class IV, V, and VI towns having less than 20, 000 populations. The role of class I cities with population of 100, 000 or more has gone up significantly. and the share of class I cities has increased from 27 percent in 1911 to 68.6 percent in 2001, i.e almost three times without taking considerations about the status of other cities. This reveals the rise in urban imbalance and inequality in the distribution of population. India has experienced very slow urban growth during the initial decades of twentieth century and it had increased to

about twelve percent till 1931 which was almost marginal. It is easily interpreted from the table that during the years the distribution of urban population across size categories reveals that the process of urbanization in India has been large city oriented. This is manifested that high percentage of urban population being concentrated in class I cities, which has gone up systematically over the period.

SECTION 1.2 TREND OF URBANISATION IN INDIA

In this section, the growth of total population along with urban population analyzed.

Census Years	Total Population in Million	Urban Population in Million	% of Urban population to total population
1911	252.1	25.9	10.27
1921	251.3	28.01	11.18
1931	278.9	33.5	12.01
1941	318.6	44.2	13.87
1951	361.0	62.4	17.29
1961	439.2	78.9	17.96
1971	548.1	109.1	19.91
1981	683.3	159.4	23.33
1991	846.3	217.6	25.71
2001	1027.1	285.4	27.78
2011	1210.19	377.11	37.07

Source: Census of India.

The size of country's urban population has increased from around 11 percent in 1901 to 37.7 percent in 2011. Thus, we see that there is more than tenfold increase in the country's urban population. It is visualized from the table that with the passage of time as the total population growth occurs in a subsequent manner, total urban population and the percentage of urban population in the total population also shows increasing trend.

SECTION 1.2.1 Trend in Urbanisation: An Inter-state Analysis

India is a large country and hence regional differences in the urbanization are worth mentioning. The regional variations in the distribution of urban population are significant. A large proportion is concentrated in six most developed states, namely Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Punjab, and West Bengal, accounting for about half of the country's urban population. By the 2011 Census, they report percentage of urban population much above the national average of 27.78,

whereas the less developed states report significantly low figures. The pattern of urban growth across states is significantly different. Since independence until 1991, the developed states that have high percentage of people in urban areas have shown medium or low growth of urban population. The urban growth is lopsided because the regional distribution of urban population is very uneven. Top three states which occupies the percentage of urban population are Maharashtra which contains 13.5%, Uttar Pradesh (11.8%) and Tamil Nadu with 9.3%. States with least in distribution of urban population are Sikkim about negligible percentage Arunchal Pradesh (0.1%) and Mizoram (0.1%).

SECTION 1.3 EFFECTS OF UNBALANCED URBANISATION

Unplanned urban growth causes growth of slums and squatter settlements, varying affects on environmental degradation and increased burden on existing infrastructure. The general problems which are the byproduct of certain kind of urbanization characteristic of low

Income countries are:

1. Shortage of houses
2. Critical inadequacies in public utilities viz, power, water, health facilities, sanitation etc
3. Deteriorating urban environment, urban unemployment, congestion etc
4. Acute poverty
5. Slums proliferation.
6. Pressure on urban land.
7. Crimes, Prostitution, gambling etc.

Along with these effects there are numerous other consequences that occur due to rapid or unplanned urbanization.

SECTION 1.4 CONCLUSION & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The unsighted forces of urbanization smooth along the lives of least resistance, shows no aptitude for creating an urban and industrial pattern that will be stable, self-sustaining and self-renewing. The Indian polices towards urbanization was traditional since independence no govt. has ever made any sincere effort to implement a uniform and coherent urban reform policy for the better management of this current issue. It is the need of the hour that attention should devote towards better management of urbanization process.

Policies concerned with urbanization and urban development must pay special attention to increase the access of the poor to urban incomes and amenities so that they also take advantages of urbanization.

There should be a mechanism for sustainable urban environmental management so that the urban environment will

be supportive to the needs of a rapidly increasing urban population.

The urbanization is always a supportive force for economic and social development and it should be welcomed, indeed we must seek out creative and sustainable ways to accelerate it in the interest of both common masses and our environment.

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