Impacts and Implications of Urbanisation in India: Social Perspectives

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Introduction

The world population is becoming predominantly urban. As per the United Nation's revised estimates world's urban population now exceeds 2.9 billion and today, more than 47 per cent of the world's population lives in cities. Besides most of the population of more developed regions already dwelling in urban areas, while in less developed countries the process of urbanization is still acute.

Urbanization refers to the movement of people permanently or temporarily from village to the city. It refers to village manners of city habits. Urbanization is a socio-economic phenomenon. It plays a significant and dynamic role in changing the ways of life of the people. It transforms, civilized as well as modernized the human societies. It serves as a significant agent in patterning and organizing the social processes in space.

The growth of any urban center are of two types - natural growth and migration. The consequences of rapid urbanization are numerous and varied. Apart from the problems of poverty, unemployment, food supply and nutrition, water supply, sewage and solid waste disposal, transport and communication, power supply, pollution control, fiscal problems resulting from financing of public services such as health and education. Further, rapid urban growth has created serious shortages of shelter and thereby led to proliferation of slums and squatter settlements.

Urbanization: Concept and Background

The term urbanisation is mostly used as a demographic indicator or in the demographic sense in whereby there is one increase in the proportion of urban population to total population over a period of time. Urbanisation is the process by which a society becomes urban interms of occupations, land use, population density etc., graduating from primary sector (agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting etc.) to secondary sector economic activitites (manufacturing) to tertiary sector) occupation supporting them (provision of services such as trade, banking, transport etc.,) urbanisation is expressed as the percentage of the total population of a large area such as a country or one of its divisions, living in urban areas.

India's urban population was 285 million as per 2001 census. The urban population lives in 5,161 towns and cities. The Indian urban population equals the combined urban population of USA, UK, and France. In absolute terms the urban population in India exceeds the total population of Brazil, Britain, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. India's urbanization followed by population, explosion, rural urban migration, industrialization has placed great stain on the country's natural resources, infrastructure and environment.

Urbanization in India

Urbanization is the most significant phenomenon of 20th century which has almost affected all aspects of national life in India. Being the second most populous country in the world, after China, India's growing urbanization has a regional as well as world wide impact. India's urban population constitutes a sizeable proportion of world's urban population. This can be well corroborated form the fact that every 12th city dweller of the world and every 7th of the developing countries in India.

Form the data provided in table no.1, it is evident that the process of industrialization, though initiated during the second plan could make little impact on the economy in terms of population shift to urban areas till 1961,

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although the second and third plans emphasized the developed of heavy and basic industries. The employment potential of these industries being limited, their growth did not lead to an absorption of labour from rural to urban areas to such an extent as to have a marked impact on the economy. The breakout of hostilities with China in 1962 and with Pakistan in 1965 and the short recession accompanied by brought by during 1967, acted as obstacles to the progress of industrialization. One can, there fore, observe that the process of industrialization through started during the sixties could not marked. Urbanization could hardly absorb a little more than the natural increase in urban population. As a result, a serious dent in terms of the shift of population from rural to urban areas could not made.

Urban population increased from 26 million in 1901 to 62 million, in 1951 – an increase of only 36 in 50 years. But thereafter, the absolute increase during the next three decades was of the order of 94 millions (1951-81). This indicates that programmes of industrialization did make an impact in terms of population absorption in urban areas, though this impact is very discernible. During the last decade (1981-91) alone, urban population in absolute terms reached the figure of 285 million accounting for 27.8 per cent of total population, 2001.

In the present paper, an attempt is made to highlight the growth of urban population and its impact and implications on the social milieu.

Source: Registrar General India.

State-wise analysis of urbanization

Year	Population in Million			% of Population		Urban Rural Ratio
	Total	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	
1901	232.9	207.3	25.6	89.0	11.0	1:8.1
1911	246.0	220.4	25.6	89.6	10.4	1:8.6
1921	244.3	216.6	27.7	88.7	11.3	1:7.8
1931	270.8	237.8	33.0	87.8	12.2	1:7.2
1941	309.0	265.8	43.5	85.9	14.1	1:6.1
1951	361.1	298.7	62.4	82.7	17.3	1:4.7
1961	439.2	360.3	78.9	82.0	18.0	1:4.5
1971	548.2	439.1	109.1	80.1	19.9	1:3.7
1981	685.2	525.7	159.5	76.7	23.3	1:3.3
1991	844.2	627.1	217.2	74.3	25.7	1:2.9
2001	1027.0	742.0	285.0	72.2	27.8	1:2.6

Degree of urbanization varies widely among the States of the country. Goa is the most urbanized State in India with 49.77 per cent urban population followed by Mizoram, Tamil Nadu and Maharastra. All Union Territories are highly urbanized except Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Degree of urbanization is high in southern, western and north eastern states whereas low urbanization level is found in northern and central states.

Maximum concentration of the country's urban population found in Maharastra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. It is important to mention that Uttar Pradesh urban population is large (34.5 million), next five states namely Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Union Territory of Delhi together account for 30.7 per cent of urban population. Remaining eighteen States and six Union Territories contain only 18.2 per cent of the urban population of India.

Effects of Urbanization

Changes in the land use pattern

When the city grows in size, it expands both horizontally and vertically. The horizontal expansion engulfed the nearby fringe villages and converts the agricultural lands and the concrete structures do not allow the water to percolate into the soil, so there is decrease of

water level. And the dwellings are so close by that the sanitary tanks so there is decrease of water wells. So there are chances of contamination of drinking water because of leakage of pipes. Another thing is land value is appreciated because of scarcity of land in the growing urban centres. So there is mushroom growth of apartments and in busy centres, the apartments are given permission without checking the way of sewage facilities.

Slums and associated problems

The acute shortage of housing facilities is one of the most serious problem plaguing the Indian cities, whether it is a metropolitan city or a small town. The reason for this is that the availability and development of housing facility has not expanded fast enough to meet growing demand for rapid urbanization process.

The acute shortage of housing facilities compels the poor to live in slums. Slums have developed in almost all the Indian cities. Slums are called by the names of Bustees in Calcutta, Jhuggis in Delhi, Chawl in Mumbai and Cheri in Chennai. The slums or Bustees hav been defined by the government of India's slum area (Improvement and clearance) Act of 1954 as predominantly a residential area, where dwellings by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement and lack of ventilation, light or sanitary facilities or any combination of these factors detrimental to safely, health and morals. It is estimated that 40 per cent of people in Mega-cities like Calcutta, Mumbai and Delhi live in slums. These slums have extremely unhygienic conditions. They have impoverished lavatories made by digging a shallow pit in between three to four huts and with sackcloth "curtain" hanging in front. The children, of course, are used to defecate anywhere around the huts. All such areas have several cesspools and puddles. These are invariable dug in the middle of a state dirty pool. People wash their clothes and utensils under the hand pumps. This causes diseases like blood dysentery, diarrhea, malaria, typhoid, jaundice and conjunctivitis, which stalk them all the year around. Children with bloated bellies or famished skeletons, many suffer from polio and common sight.

Human development is also adversely affected by the environmental degrading. Access to safe drinking water and separation are closely linked with life expectancy and infant morality which are very important indicators of Human Development. So the poor take fertility decisions to compensate for these factors and to avoid risks. Larger population leads to more poverty and worsens the environment creating a vicious circle.

Transport system

There are 300 million cars, trucks and buses all over the world. During peak hours, there will be huge traffic jams in the main junctions. Because of traffic jams more petroleum products are wasted which results in fuel problem. During peak seasons the vehicles are parked and over loaded and there are more chances of occurring accidents. It the State provides good transport system, there will be less number of two or three wheeler on which most people depend.

The combustion of petroleum products, diesel leads to increase of carbon dioxide which helps in increasing of Global Warming, air pollution and noise pollution, besides carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide which release by automobile, is very harmful to those persons exposed to congested high way to a level of about 100 ppm. The noise pollution affects both auditory and non-auditory. The auditory effects are fatigue and deafness. The non-auditory effects are interference in speed, communication, annoyance, loss of working efficiency and psycho-physiological disorders.

The transportation picture in all Indian cities is unhappy while Mumbai is still having the best city transport system and Chennai, Ahmedabad and Pune being reasonably well – served by city buses. Everywhere else if one does not have one's own transport, great hardship would be experienced in moving about in the city. One reason why we are in this mess is that, whilst planning city expansion we have still tender to follow the western concept of commuting time and distance being the determinants of the location of activities this has resulted in compartmentalized zoning of cities, which necessitates extensive travel. At the same time the level of incomes and affordability being low, our citizens are unable to pay an economic fare for the use of a public transport system. Therefore, all city bus services sustain such heavy

annual losses that they cannot really expand or maintain a fleet adequacy to meet city needs.

Problem of garbage

Urban solid waste consists of building materials, plastic containers, hospital wastes, kitchen waste etc. The building materials and household solid wastes are dumped on the public places. The hospital wastes do not have covers which transporting. The stringent smell contaminates the air. The Urban sewage does not proper let out facility.

As Indian society prospers, it trash mainly hazardous plastics, metals and packing is growing exponentially. In the last decade, garbage was produced at nearly twice the rate of population growth.

Only eight out of 3,119 towns and cities in India have full wastewater collection and treatment facilities. Another 209 have partial treatment facilities, the rest none at all, says World Bank Study. A third of India's population has no access to sanitation services. It becomes much worse in smaller cities and provincial towns.

Sewerage problems

The urban areas in India are plagued with inefficient and insufficient civic amenities. Not a single city in India is fully seweraged. The reason for this is that the unauthorized constructions in and around the city lie outside the purview of the main systems. It has been estimated that only 38 per cent of the urban population have a sewerage system. As sewage, an abysmal lack of planning has led to a situation where most sewer lines date back to colonial times.

Mumbai's crumbling sewer network is a century old, put in place by farsighted British planners when city was no more than a series of fishing villages. Today, it breaks down frequently with waste about eight million more people than it was designed for. The sewer lines lead to drains, which take the sewage – 93 per cent of it untreated – directly into the sea, killing virtually all marine life along Mumbai's coast. Delhi's Yamuna has turned into a giant sewer, chiefly from raw sewage; 40 per cent of Delhi's sewage is untreated.

Water supply

India reached a stage where no city has water supply around the clock. Intermittent supply results in a vacuum being created in empty water lines which often suck in pollutions through leaking joints. Chennai, Hyderabad, Rajkot and Wadhwan get water from municipal sources for less than half an hour every alternative day. Many small towns have no main water supply and depend on such sources as individual wells, household open wells or even the rivers which have some storage water in pools during summer.

The condition of drainage system in equally bad. Within the city, the drainage system hardly exists and the annual flooding of large areas, even in Delhi, is now a regular phenomenon in many urban centres. Mumbai is located in a keel line depression, which also happens to be the main railway artery. With every monsoon showers, it gets flooded choking the communication. The problem is particularly acute in the cities of Indo-Gangetic plain. Most of the cities so efficiently. This is the case with Varanasi and Patna. The situation is worse in the eastern part of Patna, which remains waterlogged throughout the monsoonal period. The terminal case is that of Katihar (Bihar) where, because of the peculiar bowl-like configuration of the city and the non-existence of a drainage system. Large pools of stagnant water can be seen even in the month of May and June. In Srinagar, whole colonies have become sewage to be forced back by hydraulic pressure into the sub-soil, rendering the whole land unfit for human habitation. The drains, which are open, serve as depositors for road sweepings and also human wastes. In rainy season, water over flows and spreads into streets presenting a dingy view, promoting unhygienic conditions and causing outbreak of numerous diseases.

Environmental problems

Environmental pollution is the causing concern and affecting human health today than yester decades. It has been reported by the World Bank that 40,000 persons die in India every year because of air pollution. Recent studies also revealed that a large number of people have been suffering from respiratory

diseases and allergies and cough. It has been doubled since 1990's.Futher, it has been noticed that 23 Indian Cities have crossed the dangerous limits because of auto exhausts and industrial emission. Therefore, it is not of the task of Central Pollution (Control) Board that has to take control but it is the duty of the institutions, individuals to initiate possible care and measures to bounded prevent the pollution uniting works. Hence, it should initiate in the form of a social movement. This, indeed, prevents problems arising out of pollution especially in urban areas.

Conclusion

Urbanization, is one of the causing concerns to the modern man. It is witnessed that population and its impact is found to be more in urban than rural areas. Alarming growth of urbanization, use of vehicles, industrialization, adoption of modern culture and host of factors have been affecting the health of modern man. Hence, causes and consequences urbanization, of late, have become a prime agenda for all the policy - makers, voluntary organizations, Government agencies to find out the ways to minimize and preventive measures to overcome the perils of urbanization. Therefore, it is the high and right time to identify causes of urbanisation and initiate to avoid and manage it at all levels – Government, Non-Government, Institutions and individual households.

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