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## *The Process of Urbanization in India: A Study of Causes and Effects*

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*Abstract: Actually, urbanization refers to the increase in population and industrialization in a community. The growth of cities in both size and number characterizes this process. Migration from rural areas to urban areas is a key aspect of urbanization. As cities become more densely populated, urbanization continues to accelerate, particularly in developing countries such as India. However, this growth has also led to challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, clean water shortages, housing issues, and transportation problems. This paper delves into the trend, reasons, and consequences of urbanization and rapid urbanization in India. As we know that the process of urbanization in India has resulted in rising unemployment, overcrowding, poverty, slum development, and environmental degradation, causing issues such as land insecurity, declining water quality, excessive air pollution, noise, and ineffective waste management. The present research paper highlights causes and effects of urbanization in the perspective of India.*

*Keywords: Urbanization, Human Settlement Patterns, Slum Development, Environmental Degradation, Unemployment.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Most of the scholars agree with the fact that urbanization is a defining change in human settlement patterns around the world, with increasing migratory flows during the globalization era of the 20th and 21st centuries. Thousands of people from all over the world are flocking to cities every day in pursuit of a better life. The massive migration from rural to urban areas is transforming the way we live and work. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Population Fund have identified urbanization as a key trend. The pace of urbanization has been rapidly accelerating. In 1800, only 2% of the world's population lived in cities, and by 1900, only 15% lived in towns and cities. However, the urban population began to grow rapidly in the 1950s. In 1950, over 70% of the world's population lived in rural areas, but by 2007, metropolitan areas accounted for over half of the global population. In 2014, urban areas were home to 54% of the world's population, and it is expected to increase to 6.3 billion people by 2050.

In the recent years, urbanization is closely linked to globalization and industrialization. Cities promote urban growth and economic expansion, with developed and industrialized nations serving as examples. However, urbanization also creates issues such as providing basic services such as water, sanitation, housing, and transportation. India, a rapidly growing economy, has seen a trend of accelerating urbanization since the 1990s, with economic liberalization, financial sector reforms, and decentralization contributing to the increasing significance of cities in the economy.

### II. THE CONCEPT OF URBANIZATION

It is a process that involves changes in various aspects of life in a society, including demographics, social, economic, technological, and environmental factors. It is characterized by the concentration of population in urban settlements that are

larger than villages, the increasing participation of people in secondary and tertiary production functions, and the adoption of social traits typical of rural societies. Urbanization is often associated with industrialization and modernization.

In developed nations, urbanization has been a gradual process driven by agricultural and industrial revolutions, higher incomes, and high living standards. In developing countries, however, urbanization is occurring at a rapid pace driven by the expansion of the service sector, without accompanying industrialization. The proportion of the world's population living in urban areas rose from 30% in 1950 to over 50% by 2012, and it is projected to exceed 70% by 2030.

Urbanization refers to the growing share of a country's population living in urban areas, and a declining share living in rural areas. This can occur naturally through births and deaths or through migration from rural to urban areas, or it can be caused by reclassification of settlements from rural to urban or expansion of urban boundaries.

According to the Census of India 2011, an urban area is defined as:

- **Statutory Towns:** All places with Municipal Corporations, Cantonment Boards, Notified Town Area Committees, and other similar entities declared by state laws;
- **Census Towns:** These places with a minimum population of 5000, where at least 75% of the male working population is engaged in non-agricultural work, and a population density of at least 400 persons per square kilometre.

The Population Census of India also classifies urban settlements into six size classes, taking into consideration the limitations specified as shown in table 1.

**Table 1- Classification of Urban Cities**

Population size	Category
100000 and above	Class I
50000 to 100000	Class II
20000 to 50000	Class III
10000 to 20000	Class IV
5000 to 10000	Class V
Less than 5000	Class VI

### III. THE PROCESS OF URBANIZATION IN INDIA

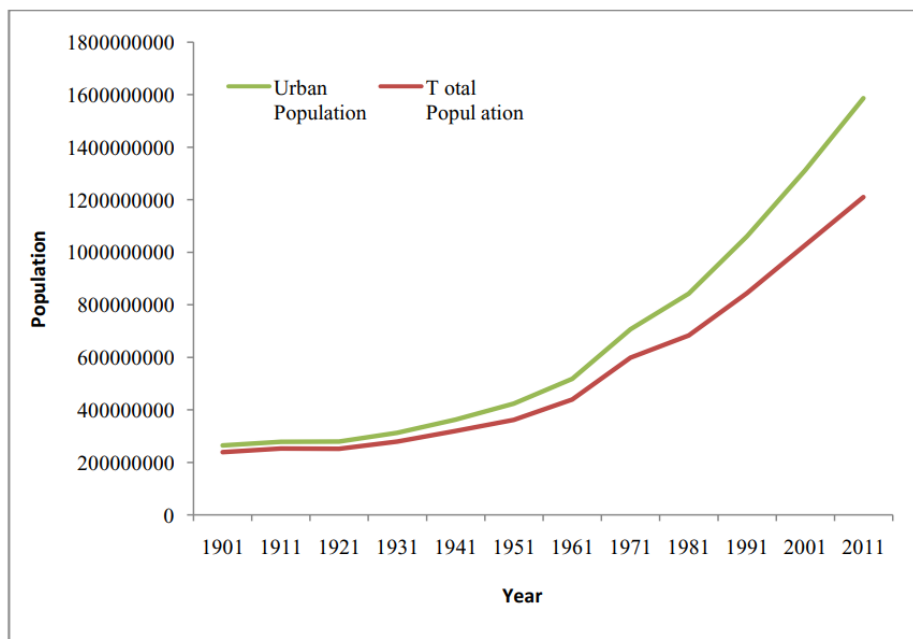
Urbanization in India has two primary methods of growth: one through the natural increase in the urban population and the other through migration, where people move from rural areas to urban areas or from smaller towns and cities to major metropolises. The Indian economy experienced growth after the government opened up its economy in the 1990s, which led to increased urbanization as most of the economic expansion was centered in urban areas. In 1951, only five cities in India had a population of one million or more, but this number increased to 53 by 2011 and was predicted to reach 100 cities with a population of one million or more by 2031. Furthermore, six cities were expected to have populations of 10 million or more by 2031, with three cities already having populations exceeding 10 million in 2011. By 2030, it was predicted that 610 million people would live in urban areas, representing 40% of India's overall population. India's cities are becoming increasingly overcrowded, with five of the 20 cities with the highest population density in the world being located in India, including Kolkata and Mumbai (Sadashivam and Shahla, 2016).

In India, the process of urbanization is similar to that seen in many underdeveloped countries. The growth of urban agglomerations and towns has increased greatly, from 1827 in 1901 to 7935 in 2011. Along with this, the population living in urban areas has gone up from 2.58 crores in 1901 to 37.71 crores in 2011, while the overall population of the country has grown from 23.84 crores to 121.7 crores (as shown in Table 2). Fig. 1 showcases this development of urbanization in India, demonstrating a continuously increasing trend. This trend of urbanization in India is accelerating and is becoming more prevalent over time.

**Table: 2 Population of India by Residence 1901-2011**

Census Years	Number of Urban agglomeration/town	Total Population	Urban Population	Rural Population	Urban Population in %
1901	1827	238396327	25851873	212544454	10.84
1911	1825	252093390	25941633	226151757	10.29
1921	1949	251321213	28086167	223235046	11.18
1931	2072	278977238	33455989	245521249	11.99
1941	2250	318660580	44153297	274507283	13.86
1951	2843	361088090	62443709	298644381	17.29
1961	2363	439234771	78936603	360298168	17.97
1971	2590	598159652	109113977	489045675	19.91
1981	3378	683329097	159462547	523866550	23.33
1991	3768	844324222	217177625	627146597	25.72
2001	5161	1027015247	285354954	741660293	27.78
2011	7935	1210193422	377105760	833087662	31.16

Sources: Various Census reports

**Figure 1: Process of Urbanization in India**

(Source: Kumar &amp; Rai, 2014)

The average annual percentage growth rate of the entire population and the rural/urban split is shown in (Table 3). Between 1951 and 1961, the rural population's average annual percentage growth rate of the rural population was 2.06% and the urban population was 2.64%, and the overall growth rate was 2.16%. It's important to note that between 1981 and the present, the population's average annual percentage growth rate in rural areas has declined.

#### IV. THE TREND OF MIGRATION IN MEGA CITIES

Recently, the trend of migration towards megacities has been a constant occurrence in many parts of the world, as individuals look for improved opportunities for employment and a higher quality of life. One of the most notable examples of this is Delhi, the capital city of India, which has experienced a significant growth in its population since 1951. Another city, Mumbai, has also seen a substantial increase in its population, especially when considering its urban agglomeration, which comprises cities with a population of more than one million. In comparison, Kolkata's population growth has been lower than Mumbai's, as observed through the index of the urban agglomeration, which was set at 100 in 1951.

#### V. CAUSES OF URBANIZATION IN INDIA

- **Modernization:-** Urban areas are characterized by advanced technology, efficient infrastructure, interconnectedness, and top-notch medical facilities, among other things. People are attracted to cities because they believe they can lead a comfortable lifestyle there. Urbanization is a process that is closely tied to modernization. People flock to cities as they become more technologically advanced, offering enhanced communication, infrastructure, medical facilities, fashionable dress codes, cultural enlightenment, liberal attitudes, and other desirable social amenities.
- **Industrialization:-** Urbanization is largely a result of industrialization, which has created new work opportunities and attracts people from rural areas to urban regions. The shift from traditional agricultural economies to advanced non-agricultural economies, also known as the industrial revolution, has driven this trend. People are drawn to cities due to the potential for better employment opportunities in contemporary industries that drive economic growth. The creation of new job opportunities in cities has contributed to the rapid growth of urban areas, as people flock to these regions in search of a better standard of living. Thus, industrialization has played a crucial role in shaping the modern society that we know today, through the creation of urban centers that are at the forefront of economic progress.
- **Employment Opportunities:-** Rural populations in India heavily rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. However, the success of this reliance is highly dependent on the monsoon season. During droughts or other natural disasters, many rural residents are forced to seek other means of income, often by migrating to urban areas. The attractive career opportunities and improved standard of living found in cities and towns continue to draw people away from rural areas. Urban areas provide a wider range of job prospects, including positions in public health, education, transportation, sports and recreation, industries, and businesses. These areas also offer a larger number of high-value-added occupations, which are often created and increased by services and drives. This abundance of employment opportunities and the prospect of better wages are the primary reasons for migration from rural to urban areas.
- **Commercialization:-** Urbanization is driven by the desire for improved economic opportunities and higher profits in businesses. The establishment of modern marketing institutions and advanced exchange techniques in urban areas have greatly boosted trade and commerce. This, in turn, has resulted in the growth and development of towns and cities. The perception that urban areas offer better economic prospects and returns than rural areas is a major factor in the commercialization and growth of commerce in urban areas.
- **Education:-** The changes brought about by urbanization have positively impacted rural areas in India. The rural population has become more literate, sophisticated and has adopted advanced technologies, which has led to an improvement in their way of life. There has been a shift in clothing habits, an increase in female empowerment and access to communication technology, including the widespread use of cell phones. There is also a greater level of political involvement and expansion of important infrastructure such as banks and post offices. Rural consumers are becoming more aware, leading to a rise in consumer demand for high-end goods such as cosmetics. However, it is worth noting that not all rural areas in India have undergone such transformation and only a few nearby settlements have experienced these changes.

- **Social Factors:-** Urbanization is largely a result of industrialization, which has created new work opportunities and attracts people from rural areas to urban regions. The shift from traditional agricultural economies to advanced non-agricultural economies, also known as the industrial revolution, has driven this trend. People are drawn to cities due to the potential for better employment opportunities in contemporary industries that drive economic growth. The creation of new job opportunities in cities has contributed to the rapid growth of urban areas, as people flock to these regions in search of a better standard of living. Thus, industrialization has played a crucial role in shaping the modern society that we know today, through the creation of urban centers that are at the forefront of economic progress.

## VI. EFFECTS OF URBANIZATION

Urbanization brings with it many challenges, including the scarcity of affordable housing, inadequate health care, and poverty alleviation. However, democratization and the empowerment of municipal governance can help address these issues and provide a pathway for the political and economic inclusion of marginalized groups, such as the underprivileged, immigrants, and slum dwellers, in urban centers. By working to address these challenges, the urbanization process can be made more inclusive and equitable for all members of society.

- ❖ **Lack of Housing:-** In the urban areas of India, one of the most pressing concerns for many residents is finding a suitable place to live. The Tenth Five Year Plan estimated the country's need for 22 million additional homes. The shortage of housing is a major factor in lowering the quality of life and well-being of the urban population, leading to more than 50% of the residents in some metropolises living in slums.
- ❖ **Critical Deficits in Public Utilities:-** The rapid growth of the urban population has not been matched by the development of urban infrastructure, leading to a number of significant issues, such as a lack of access to safe drinking water, preventive health services, sanitation facilities, adequate power supply, and basic amenities. Many cities lack even the minimum facilities, putting immense pressure on the existing urban health services to meet the needs of all those in need.
- ❖ **Degradation of Urban Environment:-** India's urbanization is largely focused on Class I cities where amenities like employment, health care, and education are easily accessible. However, this has resulted in neglecting the provision of essential services like housing, water, sanitation, and other necessities in tier 2 and 3 cities. The unchecked migration of people into large cities, combined with uneven development, has led to soil degradation, air pollution, and water pollution (Lakshmana, 2014). India is the fifth-largest contributor to global emissions, and large cities with high pollution levels include Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, and Chennai.
- ❖ **Increased Demand for Infrastructures:-** The more developed and industrialized nature of urban areas attracts even more people, leading to an increased demand for housing, drainage, and transportation services, as well as an increased production of other items needed by the urban population. This results in significant volumes of trash and pollution being emitted into the environment.
- ❖ **Noise Pollution:-** Today, noise pollution is a major contributor to the decline in quality of life in metropolitan areas worldwide. Road traffic, railroads, construction, automotive horns, loudspeakers, sirens, and industrial setups are all sources of noise pollution in urban areas, with road traffic being the primary source of noise pollution in most research on the topic. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes noise as a key pollutant that affects people's health. The quality, intensity, and duration of noise exposure determine its impact on physical and psychological processes. Chronic exposure to environmental noise has been linked to several negative health impacts, including noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL), sleep disruption, diabetes, irritation, increased heart rate and blood pressure, and elevated levels of cortisol, a stress hormone that can contribute to depression.

- ❖ **The Proliferation of Slums:-** is a major problem that is closely related to poverty in India. Rapid urbanization and a lack of adequate housing have resulted in the spread of slums across cities in India. The 2011 Census was the first to gather information on slums in India, and it revealed that nearly one in six urban households (17.4%) were located in slums and 38% of all slum households nationwide were located in cities with a population of more than one million people. Slums are characterized by harsh living conditions and are plagued by high rates of sickness, mortality, malnutrition, underemployment, and unemployment.
- ❖ **The Garbage Problem:-** This problem in India is another major challenge that affects the well-being of its citizens. Solid waste in India includes building supplies, plastic containers, medical garbage, kitchen waste, and other forms of urban solid waste. This waste is deposited in public areas and is often not covered during transportation, which leads to air contamination due to overpowering odors. There is also a lack of suitable facilities for disposing of urban waste, which is compounded by the increasing amount of hazardous plastics, metals, and packing waste generated by a growing population. In the past ten years, garbage production in India has almost doubled, with only eight complete wastewater collecting and treatment facilities out of 3,119 towns and cities. This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that one-third of the Indian population lacks access to proper sanitation facilities, with the situation being even worse in smaller towns and rural communities.
- ❖ **Transport Problem:-** The world currently uses 300 million vehicles such as cars, buses, and lorries, leading to severe traffic congestion in major intersections during peak hours. This causes a waste of more fuel, leading to an increased risk of accidents. The State is responsible for ensuring a reliable transportation system, but the overuse of automobiles leads to several problems such as air pollution, global warming, and noise pollution. The release of carbon dioxide and other pollutants from burning petroleum products, including diesel, is causing environmental harm. The noise pollution also has a significant impact on human health, leading to fatigue, loss of productivity, and annoyance.
- ❖ **Water Supply and Sanitation:-** India is facing a major water crisis, with not a single city in the country having 24-hour access to water. Due to intermittent delivery, the water supply system is often contaminated with pollutants. Many cities, such as Chennai, Hyderabad, Rajkot, and Wadhwan, receive water supply for less than 30 minutes on alternate days. Smaller communities in rural areas rely on sources such as rivers, individual wells, and open household wells. In addition, the drainage system in cities like Delhi is not functional, leading to frequent floods in several metropolitan areas. The lack of access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities is a major issue affecting the country.
- ❖ **Pressure on Sewerage System:-** The public services in India's urban areas are inadequate and ineffective, particularly in terms of the sewerage system. Not a single city in India has a complete sewerage system, and the initial plans do not account for illegal structures within and around the cities. Only 38% of the people living in cities have access to a sewerage system. Mumbai's sewerage system, built over a century ago by British city planners, is now deteriorating and often breaks down due to the increasing population and garbage.
- ❖ **Unhealthy Conditions:-** The living and social conditions in crowded urban areas impact access to public health care services. People living in slums are particularly susceptible to infectious diseases due to inadequate sanitation and water supply. Environmental factors such as urban pollution contribute to various health problems including allergies, infertility, cancer, food poisoning, asthma, and early death.
- ❖ **Overcrowding in Urban Areas:-** Overcrowding is a major issue in urban areas, where a large number of people live in limited spaces. This problem is becoming increasingly severe as more people, including immigrants, flock to cities in search of better living conditions. The migration of people from rural or underdeveloped areas to cities is also causing overcrowding and concentration of people in small spaces.

- ❖ **Unemployment in Urban Areas:-** Urban areas experience high levels of unemployment, with even higher levels among educated individuals. It is estimated that over half of unemployed youth reside in major cities. Despite high incomes in urban areas, the cost of living is also high, making the incomes seem low. The major contributor to urban unemployment is the increasing migration of people from rural or emerging areas.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Today, the 21st century is marked by the highest level of urbanization in human history. People are flocking to cities in search of better opportunities and a better standard of living. This trend is true for India as well, where urbanization is occurring at a rapid pace. While urbanization has the potential to bring significant benefits, such as job creation, technological advancements, improved transportation and communication, and better access to education and healthcare, it also poses several challenges. One of the biggest issues with urbanization in India is the lack of adequate infrastructure. As the cities grow and become more densely populated, it becomes increasingly difficult to provide basic needs such as clean water, housing, and transportation. This has led to a rise in poverty, slums, overcrowding, unemployment, and environmental degradation. In addition to these problems, unchecked urbanization has also led to land insecurity, deteriorating water quality, excessive air pollution, noise pollution, and garbage disposal issues.

Now to conclude we can say that urbanization is a double-edged sword that has both benefits and challenges. It is important to embrace it and find innovative and environmentally friendly ways to make it work for the benefit of both the people and the environment.

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