

# **Unit 13**

## **Development of Urban Sociology**

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### **Learning Objectives**

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the significance of the Chicago School in the origin and development of urban sociology;
- discuss the early urban studies based on the human ecology approach;
- describe the political economy of urbanism;
- discuss the new sociological approach to the study of urban societies;
- reflect on the inter-relation between urban sociology and underdevelopment;
- analyse the post modern theory of urbanism; and
- discuss some aspects of urban sustainable development.

### **13.1 Introduction**

In the previous Blocks 1, 2 and 3 you have studied the basic concepts and theories of urban sociology which is a branch of the sociology discipline. You have already come across several concepts and theories of urban sociology which will be explained again in the context of the development of urban sociology in India. Like the discipline of sociology, urban sociology too has emerged and developed in the developed Western Societies. The role of the Chicago School in the early growth of this branch is significant. Therefore, to give you the right perspective about this branch of sociology many of the details and discussions are repeated in these two units of Block 4 **Urban Sociology in India**.

Urban Sociology as a distinct branch of the sociology discipline emerged around early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even though cities existed even in earlier times too the social changes caused by the Industrial Revolution and consequent massing of people in the cities attracted social scientists to make the city the subject matter of study. The focus of urban sociology study in the beginning was to analyse the impact of urbanisation on the integrity of the pre-existing forms of social organisations (Flangan 1993). Later on there was significant expansion of the scope of the discipline.

This unit will deliberate on the origin of urban sociology at the Chicago School and its development till date. The unit will look into the distinct trends in the study of urban centers during different periods. Let us first know more on Chicago School.

## 13.2 Chicago School

The origin of Urban Sociology as a distinct branch of the sociology discipline can be associated with the Chicago School. The 1920s were the greatest years of urban sociological studies, which were actively centered at Chicago University. In American sociology, a theoretical base for urban sociology evolved from a series of studies conducted at the University of Chicago during the 1920s and 1930s. The development of Urban Sociology owes much to Robert E Park, Louis Wirth, Ernest W Burgess and R D McKenzie, otherwise known as Chicago School, who were the pioneers of this subject at Chicago University. Although studies on urban centers or cities developed as the subject matter of study in Social Science disciplines through the writings of the Chicago School, the theoretical formulations of social thinkers such as Karl Marx, Max Weber and Durkheim had focussed on cities or urban centers. Albeit the fact that the central concern of all these writers was with social, economic and political implications of the development of capitalism in the West, they did not consider it useful to develop a specifically urban theory. During that period there was a rapid growth of cities in the west and there was obvious and potentially disruptive social change in the societies. It is very obvious that the theories of Durkheim (disintegration of moral cohesion), Weber (the growth of calculative rationality) and Marx (the destructive forces unleashed by the development of capitalism) are centered on urban life. Although their theories centered on city and city life, the development of urban sociology took place at the Chicago School, which did draw from the theories of earlier social thinkers.

The first department of Sociology in the U.S.A. was started at University of Chicago in the year 1892. The department was headed by Albion. W. Small and scholars such as Charles R. Henderson, W.I. Thomas and George E. Vincent were part of the department. Early in the 1920s sociologists at Chicago began the painstaking task of gathering the facts of urban life, guided by theoretical notions concerning the growth and structure of cities and the nature of human beings and its institutions.

The birth of urban sociology has a close association with the expansion of Chicago city. Rapid commercialisation and industrialisation of the city occurred in later 19<sup>th</sup> century. There was the influx of migrants from places like, Europe, France, Sweden, Germany, Czechoslovakia etc. and the city became more and more complex as it became multi cultural, multilingual and with unequal distribution of wealth (Fredrick Cressey 1971). The population of Chicago doubled from 1898 to 1930. This rapid growth was accompanied by marked changes in the distribution of the city's population. Not simply did the population expand over a large area but certain sections of the city grew more rapidly than others. This rapid growth and expansion of the city witnessed in Chicago and also in other parts of the world became the focus of study of the Chicago Sociologists. The metropolis, the great urban complex which plays a dominant role in the social life of its inhabitants and the cultural, political and economic life of the nations of the world over became the integrating theme of the Chicago School.

By 1920s the Chicago School found that the natural areas could be significantly studied in two aspects:

- a) **The spatial pattern:** This includes the topography of the local community and the physical arrangement which not only include land space but also the structures that the people constructed, that sheltered the inhabitants and provided the places of work and play.
- b) **The cultural life:** The modes of living and customs and standards. The spatial aspect gave rise to ecological studies, all that could be mapped; the distribution, physical structures, institutions, groups and individuals over an area.

The University of Chicago studies emerged from a concern about the social problems of the city. One of the obvious by-products of mapping the social problems of urban neighbourhoods was the capability of resource management, of being able to direct and concentrate services where the problems are most intense. Social pathologies, like, crime and suicide, are invariably concentrated in certain ecological areas. Thus, ecological theories provide a base for the development of more specialised theories of deviance and control. Now let us revise some of the ecological theories of urban space learnt in Unit 5, 6 and 7.

### 13.3 Studies in Urban /Human Ecology

The theory of Human Ecology of urban areas can be called the first systematic theory of the city. It was the first comprehensive urban social theory. Ecology is the science that studies the interrelationship between organisms and their environment. Human ecology was concerned with the specific theoretical problem of how human population (social structures and processes) adapted to their urban environment. To Robert E. Park, the proponent of this theory, human ecology is a perspective, a method and body of knowledge essential for the scientific study of social life (Wirth 1945). The ecological approach assumed a significant place in urban studies in 1930s in different parts of the world. The advocates of human ecology at the Chicago School were Robert E. Park, R.D. McKenzie and Ernest W. Burgess. They attempted to relate ethnographic characteristics of urban life to the spatial distribution of urban population in the well known concentric zone model of urban development (Wilson and David 1978). While Park and McKenzie considered the city as representing an externally organised unit in space produced by laws of its own, Burgess treated the growth of the city in terms of its physical expansion and differentiation in space (Rao, M.S.A. et al 1991).

Urban ecology is based upon identifying and mapping geographical sectors of a large land area, and then analysing the social phenomena which are peculiar to the various smaller areas. In most of the ecological models urban areas are compared showing some kind of central tendency for each locale. Ecological studies produce composite overview of group tendencies and then specific subgroups. Thus, they provide information for aggregates not for individuals. There are various ecological models that attempt to analyse the urban social structure. Ralph Thorlinson (1969) catogarises ecological models into spatial, natural, social and economic. All models usually employ area typologies, which may be shown on maps. Each method also employs a different theoretical orientation, resulting not only in different explanations of the social process of different locales, but also in a set of area boundaries which vary substantially, depending on the method employed (Robert Wilson).

**Human Ecology Theory of Robert E. Park:** It was Robert E. Park who appropriated the principles of natural science (ecology) for the analysis of urban spaces (urban ecology) (Flanagan, W. 1993). Ecology can be defined

as "that place of biology that considers plants and animals as they exist in the nature and studies their interdependence and the relation of each kind and individual to its environment" (encyclopaedia). Park observed a correspondence between plant communities in the natural environment and emergence of natural area within the cities where similar societal constituents of the urban environment congregated. A unity of function can be identified in each natural area or community. Their functional unity as well as the emerged moral unity make each area somewhat unique in terms of the values and norms of behaviour that prevailed there. In other words urban environment can be broken down into a mosaic of social worlds where each section is structurally and culturally distinct from each other. All of them are at the same time interdependent on each other.

Park's theory of human ecology has drawn from Durkheim's theory of division of labour and Darwinian theory of evolution. Durkheim's argument that the aggregation of large number of people in concentrated settlements required a complex division of labour and his observation that the society required the reintegration of specialised urbanities into a complementary organic whole provided the principles of a theory of the ecological interdependence of human population. Darwinian understanding of how competition produced patterns of dominance and subordination among the elements of society also contributed to the development of the theory of human ecology.

Like Durkheim's theory of division of labour, Park argues that an increase in population size within the given area together with an extension of transport and communication networks results in greater specialisation of functions. The functional differentiation distributes different economic groups to different niches in the urban environment. This facilitates competition as well. The competition between individuals, Park argues, gives rise to relations of competitive co-operation and communal equilibrium till the equilibrium is disturbed either by the advent of some intrusive factor from within or in the normal course of life history. Thus it leads to the development of communities in a cyclic fashion (Saunders 1981).

### **Urbanism as a Way of Life - Louis Wirth**

Sociologists working in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on theories of city life emphasised the alienating aspects of the urban environment or to put it otherwise the opposition between community and the city life. Louis Wirth was one of the first to lay stress on the social aspects of urbanism. He tried to discover the forms of social action and organisation that typically emerge in relatively permanent compact settlements of large numbers of heterogenous individuals (Rao et al 1992).

According to the theory of urbanism Louis Wirth believed that the larger, the denser, and the more heterogenous the population of an area, the more urbanised will be the life style of the people. Thus the principle elements of urbanisation according to him are the population size, population density and population heterogeneity. His view was that the city's heterogeneity, large size, high density; secular cosmopolitan atmosphere tended to be seen as contributing to people's alienation rather than affording an opportunity for richer life (Louis Wirth 1938). Louis Wirth analyses that the city as a permanent settlement of a human population of high density and with a sufficiently high degree of heterogeneity results in the emergence of new culture, characterised by the transition from

primary to secondary relations, role segmentation, anonymity, isolation, instrumental relations, the absence of direct social control, the diversity and transience of social commitments, the loosening of family ties and individualistic competition. It is this socio-cultural context which is the ultimate explanation of the new forms of human behaviour.

His idea is that the social organisation of a large human settlement or urban area makes a life style based on primary relationship (seen in rural areas) very difficult. Typically urbanites meet one another in highly segmented roles. Their encounters tend frequently to be limited to situations, which involves specialised, limited aspects of the person's total spectrum of roles. It is this role fragmentation and limited integration among different roles, which causes a kind of alienation, which in turn is associated with a large number of social pathologies, such as crime, suicide, and mental illness that are brought about by a poorly integrated social structure.

The population density or the crowded physical space of the urban areas also affects both the frequency and quality of human interaction. Thus when he talks about the population density as the principal basis of urbanisation he actually means the social density or density of social interactions. The diverse nature of cities in terms of ethnicity, culture, social structure and general life style gives it the heterogenous nature. This heterogenous nature of urban centers account for the anomie quality of urban life. In addition to the city's diversity, the fragmentation of social relationships is compounded by the seeming unconnectedness of various facets of urban life. In urban areas where one resides, where one works and the kind of job one has, one's income, one's interests and one's allegiances are not well related either spatially or culturally. This heterogeneity, Wirth said, also resulted in people clustering into various ecologically segregated areas ethnic ghettos, poverty areas, and middle class neighbourhoods (Wilson 1978).

#### Box 13.1 Hurd's Star Theory

The star theory propounded by R.M. Hurd suggests that a city grows from its center along its major transportation arteries, resulting in a star shaped configuration. This form is most common to cities with streetcar, subway, or rail commuter lines, and seems to reflect the large city before the advent of freeways and other highways designed primarily for high speed communication by automobile. The population was concentrated within walking distance of the transportation routes, a pattern which still manifest in cities with well developed mass transit systems. When cars became the predominant mode of travel, the spaces between the points of the star began to fill in, making decreased reliance on public transportation (Wilson Robert 1978).

#### The Ecological Process – McKenzie

The theory of community change was most explicitly set out by one of Park's colleagues at University of Chicago, R.D. McKenzie. He focused on the dynamic nature of urban area and developed a sociological theory of changing land use. He developed a typology of various ecological processes instead of focusing on configurations and shape of areas. He defined ecology as a study of spatial and temporal relations of human beings as

affected by the selective, distributive and accommodative forces of the environment (McKenzie). To ecologists society is made up of individuals spatially separated, territorially distributed and capable of independent locomotion. McKenzie argues that these spatial relationships of human beings are the products of competition and selection and are continuously in the process of change as new factors enter to disturb the competitive relations or to facilitate the mobility. He identified seven ecological processes, which incorporates notions of population shifts and changes in the dominant land use pattern. These ecological processes are concentration, deconcentration, centralisation, decentralisation, segregation, invasion and succession.

McKenzie distinguishes four types of communities based on their functions. These are:

- Primary service community
- Commercial community
- Industrial town
- Community without specific economic base.

He argued that the size of any human community is limited by what it can produce and by the efficiency of its mode of distribution. Which means a primary service community such as one based on agriculture cannot grow beyond a population of around 5000, whereas an individual town can grow many times more.

According to him any particular type of community tended to increase in size until it reached its climax point at which the size of the population was not perfectly adjusted to the capacity of the economic bases to support it. The community would remain in this state of equilibrium till some new element, for example a new mode of communication or technological innovation disturb the balance, at which point new cycle of biotic adjustment would begin involving movement of population, and differentiation of functions or both. Competition would again sift and sort the population functionally and spatially until a new climax stage was reached. The concepts McKenzie used to express these movements are invasion and succession, (about which you learnt in Unit 5 of this course), the movement of distinctive populations into residential areas, replacing the previous residential groups, which typically involves the displacement of higher or lower economic categories.

The major developments in urban ecological theory since 1950s can be attributed to the ecological theories of Duncan (1959) and Hawley (1950, 1986). Duncan integrates ecological model and structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons in developing his theory of ecological complex. Duncan developed the notion of ecological complex, which is also a theory of regulation and change of the community as a social system in terms of the interaction of the four component elements of the ecological complex: environment, population, technology and social organisation. Hawley argued that space is not the central concern of ecology, but the focus must be on functional differentiation and adaptation of human populations. His ecological theory also was very close to Parsonian functionalism.

**Box 13.2 Design Approach**

This approach is closely related to the architecture of a city. It deals with the plan of a city and its various components. It traces the aesthetic principles that guided the layout of the street patterns (Bacon 1967). This approach is concerned with the relationship between building and transportation technology, and the size, shape, and functions of buildings and public facilities. It pays attention to natural features such as topography, lithography, hydrological conditions, and drainage patterns of the site and to the physical development of the city (Dickinson 1951). Here an attempt is made to identify the unique features of the city's structures at a given period. The process of urban morphogenesis, i.e. the relations among the societal processes and transformations of the physical fabric of cities also has been explored (Vance 1977). Although this approach lacks a complete conceptual framework, it provides valuable information on architecture and urban forms.

**Criticisms**

Much of the classical ecological theories were based on the shape and arrangement of land use pattern of urban spaces. And so also much of the criticisms of urban ecology centered on this aspect. There had been varied criticisms on the ecologists' argument of urban space expansion of circular fashions.

Another basis of urban ecological—theory, the factors of urbanisation—size, density and heterogeneity - also became a point of criticism. A close examination of the main works of the Chicago School shows that their central focus is not so much on everything that takes place in the city but on the processes of social disorganisation and individual maladjustment, the persistence of anonymous subcultures, deviant or otherwise, and their resistance to integration (Pickvance, C.G (ed) 1976. *Urban Sociology: Critical Essays*. Tavistock Publications: London). Critics argue that changes in size, density, and heterogeneity of population do not lead to the fragmentation and disorganisation of social life as described by Ecologists. Also it is argued that the ecological theories do not account for the subcultures and lifestyles of various neighbourhoods and subgroups within the urban areas (Greer and Kube 1969).

Critics argue that the earlier ecology models of urban land use assumed that the cities grew around a single industrial or commercial center, but cities have sprawled outward and become less focused after the Second World War.

For ecologists' economic competition was the basis of general growth process of cities that produced functional differentiation and ordering of urban space. This also was widely criticised based on the argument that it is not economic factors always that determine the nature of urban expansion. Firey (1945) argued that urban space may have a symbolic as well as economic value, and the locational activity in urban spaces may therefore reflect sentiment and symbolism as much as economic rationality, which is the only one factor suggested by the human ecologists. Through his studies he showed that certain areas maintained certain characters despite invasions and successions which had long since altered the character of other areas within the same radius of the city's centre. And it is the

spatial symbolism attached to those areas which helped to maintain its characteristics. A major criticism against the ecological model was that all these theorisations were based on the urban centers in America and the cities of those times are not comparable in any way to the cities of the later periods. These cities were not as compatible as the earlier ones.

After the Chicago School; especially after the Second World War, there was an evident lack of theoretically specific area of study in Urban Sociology other than human ecology, although the major theories of ecology since then were not based on urban arena that attracted the Chicago School. Instead society has become the ecologist's unit of analysis, and physical space itself has become one of the many dimensions of human society (Flanagan 1993). Urban Sociology became the study of everything that happened in urban areas – changing patterns of kinship, political controversies over land use, educational deprivation among the working class, etc – and it therefore became indistinct from the sociological analysis of advanced, industrial capitalist societies (Saunders 1981).

### 13.4 Political Economy of Urbanism

While the Chicago School made their theorisation's on the basis of their studies of American cities, later works in urban sociology spread to other continents also. Towards the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s a new paradigm for the urban analysis emerged where the emerging body of theory based on the assumption that it is conflict not equilibrium as propounded by the ecologists, is at the center of social order. The new approach focused on the role of capitalism, the international economic order, the accumulation and concentration of wealth and power, the relations of social classes, and the role of state in administering a stable social order ultimately hospitable to economic interests. To put it in other words the urban social structure tends to be analysed in the backdrop of the Marxian theory of historical materialism. For the advocates of this paradigm, cities symbolised the inequalities of wealth and power generated by the profit system and the spatial expression of urban arenas were in terms of capital accumulation and class conflict. This approach became known as the political economy of urbanism (Flanagan 1993).

#### Reflection and Action 13.1

You have read about the early ecological approach to the study of urban society based on the equilibrium or consensus thesis. Now the later understanding of sociologists and other social scientists, such as, Manuel Castell and others, has tried to give a conflict approach to the study of urban society.

Write an essay of about two pages on the approach that you agree with and why. Discuss your essay with other learners at your Study Center.

Applied to urban studies, political economy guides researchers to ask questions about the ways in which policy has articulated with economic forces to produce particular kinds of urban environments, with particular costs and benefits for different elements of urban population, eliciting particular reactions for the citizens. In general, it is an extension of broader sociological theory to the analysis of urban space (Flanagan 1993: 84). Political economy paradigm developed as an alternative to urban ecology and became an influential approach in 1970s and 1980s.

The urban analysis of Rex and Moore (1967) developed a new sociological approach to the analysis of the city. They studied the housing and the race relations of the inner city area of a British city. In this they developed a theoretical framework, which represented a fusion between Burgess's work on zone transition and Weber's sociological emphasis on the meaningful actions of individuals (Saunders 1981). This approach enabled urban sociology to retain its distinctive concern with the spatial dimension to social relationships drawing theory from mainstream sociology. Rex and Moore in their *Race, Community and Conflict* (1962) suggest that in the initial settlement of the city, three different groups differently placed with regard to the possession of property, become segregated from one another and work out their own community life style. These three groups are the upper middle class, the working class and the lower middle class. Like in the concentric zone they also suggest that city growth involves the migration of population from central to outlying areas. But this is not only due to the expansion of the central business district but also, because of the widespread pursuit of a middle class way of life, which becomes associated with the newly developing suburbs.

According to Rex and Moore moving to suburbs is an aspiration that is general among all groups of residents. Although a desired resource, suburban housing is scarce, access to it is unequally distributed among the population. Therefore the allocation of suburban houses to different sections of population becomes crucial to understand the distribution of life chances in the city. Also the pattern of housing distribution constitutes the basis for the potential conflict between different groups demanding access to the same resources. Thus, the questions of access and conflict with regard to suburban housing provides the analysis of urban processes a new orientation, which raises inherently political fundamental concerns.

The basic social processes within the city therefore relate to the allocation of scarce and desirable housing, both through the market and by bureaucratic means, and to the resulting struggle over housing by different groups located at different points in the housing hierarchy. Rex and Moore suggested that this struggle over housing could be analysed as a class struggle over the distribution of life chances in the city. This means that just like class struggles occurred in the world of work with respect to the distribution of life chances, they occurred in the realm of consumption of housing. For Rex and Moore, the housing market represents an analytical point at which the social organisation and the spatial structure of the city intersect (Haddon cf. Saunders 1981).

Phal (1970) also argues that the city is a source of new inequalities over and above those generated in the world of work, although he recognises that wage inequalities are an important factor determining urban inequalities. According to him the task of urban sociology is to study the distributional patterns of urban inequalities as these are affected by both market and bureaucratic processes.

Manuel Castells is another major proponent of the political economy paradigm. In his book *The Urban Question* (1977) offers a Marxist analysis as a viable alternative to the then existing urban thought. For Castells urbanism is not a concept, but a myth because it recounts, ideologically, the history of the mankind. He was critical of the urbanism approach in that he feels urbanism is the cultural expression of capitalist industrialisation, the emergence of the market economy and the process of rationalisation of the modern society and this same process has been described as modernisation or westernisation by others. He says urban

sociology founded on urbanism is an ideology of modernity ethno centrally identified with the crystallisation of the social forms of liberal capitalism (Castells 1978). His idea of urban space is that it is the arena within which the reproduction of labour is concentrated, that is, the urban consists, among other things, of a system within which individuals reproduce their labour power through private (self-provided) and collective (state-mediated) consumption. The urban space is a built environment, a subsystem produced by the structural system - the larger, societal order constituted by a matrix of economic, political and ideological conventions. He views urban as a distinctive spatial aggregation of the economic arrangements of wider society and the modern city is the physical expression of capitalism in particular. He also explains the segregation and expansion of urban spaces in terms of capital accumulation and class conflict.

David Harvey analysed the urban process in the political economy paradigm devoting special attention to the problem of concentration and circulation of capital. His argument is that urban environment is the rational product of the process of capital accumulation.

### 13.5 The New Urban Sociology

Although the term political economy has its origins in structural Marxism, it has come to have a much broader application, especially from the 1980s. Though most of the political economy theorisation's in urban sociology in the 1970s operated within the Marxist paradigm, there was a move away from this in the 1980s as works of most of the urban sociologists formulated mixing both Marxist and non-Marxist elements. All the political economists unified in their approach to the urban studies on the idea that the urban arena is a physical extension of market factors supplemented by the policies of government or the state (Flanagan 1993).

Since the 1980s the urban analysis in political economy have expanded to incorporate an ever greater emphasis on the role of the state and public policy, the various features of local history and other circumstances that require to recognise the uniqueness of each city as a case history and the attention to the operation of elites or even coalitions of common citizens in shaping the future of the locality (Flanagan 1993).

Gottdiener (1985) criticising both ecological and structuralist Marxist approaches to the urban analysis argues for the need to incorporate economic, political and cultural forces in understanding the way urban space is produced. According to the emerging paradigm, the local histories become significant and the people do make a difference; and that the ideas and meanings are not perfectly subject to the dominant economic and political forces, and the material conditions that these forces produce. Lefebvre (1979) attaches prime importance to people and their actions in defining and redefining urban spaces.

Castells (1983) in his *The City and the Grassroots*, shifting from his former Marxist view that class struggle is the prime mover of social change, argues that social class is just one of the bases for the urban coalition, along with many other bases for the formation of interest groups that struggle to impart a particular meaning to a given city or part thereof. He establishes that the meaning or symbolic significance that a particular urban area takes on is in part the outcome of a struggle among different interest groups that compete to control urban space. The autonomous role of the state, the gender relationships, the ethnic and national movements and the movements that define themselves as citizens movements are other alternative forces of urban social change.

### 13.6 Urban Sociology and Theories on Underdevelopment

The issues of underdevelopment and third world urban study were always a part of urban sociology. The size and rate of growth of developing countries became the focus of attention for the urban social sciences. Moreover, the fact that it is not industrialization that drives urbanisation in these countries but several other factors also became a matter of analysis. The general pattern attached to the Third World urbanisation tend to have an urgent or problematic nature that stems from the limited assets of the governments, the desperate poverty of the elements of the population concerned, and the enormity of the dimensions of urban growth.

The three theoretical approaches to the problem of underdevelopment are the modernisation theory, the dependency theory and the world-system theory. All these three approaches are based on two paradigms that provide the foundations for the arguments over the causes of underdevelopment in general and the particular role played by the cities. These are the modernisation and the political economy paradigms. The modernisation paradigm provides the basic assumptions of the modernisation theory and the political economy approach provides a broad theoretical orientation for dependency and world-system theories. Modernisation theorists see cities as the potential engines of economic growth, while political economists emphasize the parasitic effects that urban concentrations have on the territories that they dominate.

The implication of the rate and pattern of uncontrolled urban growth had been a matter of heated debate in the study of Third World urbanisation. The two related aspects of this issue are a) the sheer aggregate growth of the proportion of a national population living in the cities and b) the concentration of the population in a particular city. The urban issues that received more attention from those who were concerned with urbanisation and underdevelopment are over urbanisation, urban primacy, urban bias, squatter settlement and informal employment. Their implications have been viewed somewhat differently as the field of development studies has evolved differing theoretical emphases over the past several decades. The large urban centers of underdeveloped nations have been characterised both as engines of positive change (modernisation theory) and parasites that suck the potential for growth out of the economy (dependency and world system theory).

Modernization theorists argue that there is an inherent backwardness and dysfunction of indigenous culture, organisation and technology in the underdeveloped regions and for the advancement of these regions there is a need to adopt the values and political and economic strategies of the industrialised nations (Inkeles 1966, Rostow 1960). A fundamental assumption of this approach is that the relationship between rich and poor countries is essentially a beneficial one, with an emphasis on the benefits that accrue to poor nations as a result of the diffusion of the habits and conventions of the richer nations, which according to modernisation theorists is essential for the development of the poor regions. To the modernisation theorists, modernisation has operationalised to mean differentiation, specialisation and functional interdependency and according to them lack of this precisely is the cause for their underdevelopment. Hence from this perspective it can be concluded that rapid urbanisation is not a problem, but a solution to the problem of underdevelopment. Same is the case with

primacy or over urbanisation too. Here cities are seen as the most efficient instruments of change in an international system of cultural diffusion, and the larger the city, the higher the rate of transfer.

Whereas scholars like Andre Gunder Frank (1967) emphasised the instrumental role of the international system of cities in perpetuating the disadvantage of poor nations. The profits extracted from poorer regions grew in size as commodities moved from city to city, up the urban hierarchy, away from the producer towards the consumer. This was the view of the new perspective, the dependency theory, regarding underdevelopment. According to this perspective the underdeveloped economies in their relationship with the rich nations incur a systematic disadvantage. The disadvantaged position of those who exchange raw materials for the products of the advanced manufacturing technologies is exacerbated by the imbalance that exists in political as well as economic power between poor and rich economies. According to them the neocolonial arrangements of the poor nations are not much different from the colonial past and the poor nations continue to supply labour and materials to the international system at bargain rates and this ensures the continued disadvantage of the poorer nations.

#### Reflection and Action 13.2

Do you think that the cities in India are growing, in terms of wealth and opportunities, at the cost of the rural hinterland? Think carefully, use reference books, articles, journals etc., for relevant material from the library and write a report of two pages on this issue giving your own opinion based on secondary data collected by you. Compare your report with those of other learners at your Study Center.

The tradition that dependency theorists drew for explaining underdevelopment was Marxism, which had a pronounced influence in the study of urbanisation and underdevelopment. Dependency theory largely derived in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean and suggests that the development of the Third World nations has been dictated by its integration into the capitalist mode of production and that the more such nations get incorporated into the capitalist system the more underdeveloped they become (Frank 1967). This approach has clear implications for urban development in the form of what is called dependent urbanization (Castells 1977). Friedmann and Wulff (1976) stated that the developed countries established their urban outposts in the developing countries for three closely related reasons: i) to extract a surplus by way of primary products ii) to expand the market for goods developed under advanced monopoly capitalism and iii) to ensure the continued stability of the indigenous political system that will most willingly support the capitalist system.

In 1974 Immanuel Wallerstein introduced the world-system model. This theory too was linked to Marxist tradition. Whereas the dependency theory posited a two-tierd international stratification, the world system theory offered a three-tier system. In addition to the core (economically developed) and the poor or underdeveloped (periphery) here there is semi-periphery. In the world system theory the analysis is including the entire system at all levels of core, periphery and semi-periphery, rather than dependent nation alone as in the dependency theory. This approach is advantageous to urban studies in that it moves closer to a global, structural context in the analysis of urban processes, which may be a necessary step in advancing understanding how cities grow and change. The world system model

preserves the idea that the world economy is integrated to each other through a series of hierarchical exchanges, inequalities in the power to establish favourable terms of trade among the interacting states. It provides the basis for exploitation. Dominant states take advantage of the next lower tier or tiers.

The world system theory introduced a new approach to the international trends in urbanisation. It perceives a link in the urban processes in the core, periphery and semi-periphery. According to the world system theory change in the world occurs primarily in response to the progressive rationalisation of the globe in market terms. So also it tries to seek connection between changes taking place in cities throughout the world. It conveys the image of an international system of cities. Some urbanologists (King 1990) visualise the world as a large interdependent city transcendent of national boundaries. Chase Dunn examines the pattern of commodity exchanges that take place between different urban centers of the globe. The exchanges between the largest cities of the core are dense within and across national boundaries, while peripheral cities exchange mostly with the core cities and very little with one another. Regarding the types of the commodities exchanged, capital intensive goods would circulate among the core cities and flow to the periphery, while labour intensive raw materials would flow from the periphery to the core.

The world system model is a powerful conceptual tool for urban sociology because it facilitates a comprehensive analysis of structural forces effecting change in cities everywhere. However, like every theory that is global in scope, the world system theory has been faulted for being insensitive to local, region-by-region and city-by city variations (Flanagan 193).

### 13.7 Post Modern Urbanism

The postmodernist idea of the city emerged as a reaction against modernism. According to Michael Dear (2000) post-modern cities are composed of multiple, differently interconnected sites, arranged in a decentered, non-hierarchical fashion. The contemporary urban dynamics no longer functions as a continuing accretion starting from a central core, but according to a process in which "the periphery organises the center", in a context of globalisation in which "the local material and informational flows enter into interaction with global flows to constitute an urban economy that is globally integrated, and dominated by the imperatives of flexibility." (Ibid) In "The Condition of Post-modernity" David Harvey (2000) defines the postmodern city with the rise of a) historical eclecticism, (as inventing tradition by imitating the older forms) b) multiculturalism, (reference with the locality and ethnicity) and c) spectacle (a theater scene, commercialisation of built environment). He explains the turn from "modernism" to "postmodernism" refers to the change of economic system and cultural codes. Stuart Hall (1996) thought of the post-modern city as discontinuous and fragmented space, self-contained 'alternative' cities, and rediscovery of the local. Collectively there is a wide variety of overlapping themes in the postmodernists' vocabulary. These themes, according to Ellin, include contextualism, historicism, the search for urbanity, regionalism, anti-universalism, pluralism etc. (Nan Ellin 2000) The rising values and fields of postmodern urbanism are community participation (based on pluralism and regionalism), mixed use (associated with ecological approaches), pedestrian friendly design (addresses the vitality and livability) and urban design (maintained mainly by historic preservation and environmentalism).

**Box 13.1 Foundations of Post-Modern Urbanism**

It was Dear and Flusty's who propounded the concept of postmodern urbanism by synthesising recent studies on the contemporary form of Southern California urbanism. Their key argument is that most 20th-century urban analyses have been predicated on the Chicago School's model of concentric rings. They aimed to develop a new concept under the banner of the Los Angeles School of centerless "keno" capitalism.

The great wave of globalisation in the second half of the twentieth century has been heralded by the public as well as by social scientists as a new stage of global capitalism with allegedly unique qualities based on new technologies of communication and information processing. According to the theorists of global capitalism it was during the 1960's that the organisation of economic activity entered a new period expressed by the altered structure of the world economy: the dismantling of industrial centers in the United States, Europe and Japan; accelerated industrialisation of several Third World nations; and increased internationalisation of the financial industry into a global network of transactions.

Observing the large-scale changes taking place in the globalisation era, based on activities in the urban centers and its interactions and interrelations with the rest of the world (such as global-local connection, an ubiquitous social polarisation, and a reterritorialisation of the urban process) urban researchers proposed a set of theses such as world city hypotheses (John Friedmann), global city hypotheses (Saskia Sassen), dual city theory (Manuel Castells) and edge city (Joel Garreau). Dear and Flusty founded on these perceptions proposes post-modern urbanism. This urban perception based on global capitalism argues that society is transformed from the modern epoch to the post modern epoch and the post modern urban processes are juxtaposed to the urban process of modern industrial urban expansion where urbanisation was centered around a central focal activity such as an industrial unit.

The post modern urbanism thesis is very closely associated with the Los Angeles School. The fundamental features of the Los Angeles model include a global-local connection, an ubiquitous social polarization, and a reterritorialisation of the urban process in which the hinterland organizes the center. The post modern urbanism thesis is premised on the assumption that our society has been transformed and has moved from a modern epoch to a postmodern epoch — an argument that has been hotly contested among social scientists. The advocates of the Los Angeles School of post modern urbanism argue that the Los Angeles School has emerged and replaced the Chicago School of urban studies. They are also of the view that there had been no meaningful or significant urban studies conducted during the period between the Chicago School and the Los Angeles School. The three pillars of postmodern urbanism are the world-city hypothesis, the dual-city theory, and the edge-city model.

## **13.8 Sustainable Urban Development**

During the 1990s there had been a fundamental argument nationally and internationally which states that a healthy and safe environment is essential for the continued survival of a given population. Since the Brundtland Commission published its report *Our Common Future* in 1987, the sustainability debate has revealed major differences in thinking about

development, economic growth, social change and environmental conservation (WCED 1987). The commission defined sustainable development as the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generations. Sustainable development was initially associated with sustainable environmental development in response to the degradation and destruction of the ecosystems and species that have occurred as a side effect of the growth of the human economy and population over the past few centuries (White, Rodney R. 2001). Later on there had been demands to add economic and social opportunity of human needs.

There was also a strong argument that a healthy and secure environment is a prerequisite for successful urban development. There had been a growing amount of work that examined the relationship between the environment and urbanisation in the past two decades. The objective of sustainable urban development is to achieve sustainability in planning and development of urban settlements. Like in sustainable development, in sustainable urban development too the environment and resource utilisation are not the only guiding principles. For a sustainable urban settlement planning, it shall be politically and socio-culturally acceptable as well as environmentally, economically, technologically, physically, fiscally and infrastructure-wise feasible (Kulshrestha, 2001). Access to and command of resources for low-income groups is seen as a major objective of sustainable urban development (Potter and Evans 1998). Sustainable urban space shall provide healthy, safe environment that meets sustainable goals. These include a healthy living environment, safe water supply, the provision of sanitation, drainage and garbage treatment, paved roads, an adequate economic base, and good governance (Hardoy et al 1992). Besides these, there are also other important social and cultural goals that improve city living.

### 13.9 Conclusion

This unit traces the development of urban sociology as a distinct branch of the sociology discipline. City and urban space and life had been a matter of concern for social thinkers even before urban sociology was accorded the status of a distinct discipline in early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the studies conducted and theoretical formulations made by the Chicago School. The ecological paradigm of Robert E. Park and colleagues and cultural perspective of Louis Wirth gained widespread attention of social scientists. The initial sections of this unit examine these approaches at length. Though these approaches predominated the urban studies in the beginning, later on there had been attempts to explain urban phenomena from different perspectives. The late 1960s and 1970s saw increased interests on the part of scholars in applying the mainstream theory of historical materialism for examining urban conditions. The unit also discusses the modernization and political economy paradigms explaining urban phenomena. Towards the end of the unit we have discussed the latest trends in the urban studies, that is, sustainable urban development.

### 13.10 Further Reading

Flanagan, William G. 1993. *Contemporary Urban Sociology*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Sunders, Peter 1981. *Social Theory and the Urban Question*. Hutchinson and Co. Ltd.: London.

Ellin, Nan 2000. *Post modern Urbanism*. Princeton Press: U.K.

# **Unit 14**

## **Urban Sociology in India**

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### **Learning Objectives**

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- describe some of the urban sociological studies done in India;
- discuss the historical comparative studies in urban area;
- explain the ecological urban studies;
- discuss some of the studies on urbanisation and urban growth;
- describe the studies done on urban poverty, housing and slums in India, and
- discuss the caste, class and ethnic formations that are found in urban societies.

### **14.1 Introduction**

Urbanization in India is not a modern phenomenon. A very rich traditional process of urbanisation, which dates back to the Indus Valley Civilisation (2500 B.C.), existed in India. The urbanisation process diffused to other parts of the country notwithstanding some temporal and spatial discontinuity in urban growth. The spread of urbanisation in India happened under the impact of varied factors operating during early, medieval and modern periods. Although India thus had a long history of urbanisation and urban spread, any systematic study on the Indian urban phenomena began only in early 20<sup>th</sup> century at a time when urban sociology was getting recognition as a distinct branch of Sociology in the U.S.A. and other western countries.

The birth and growth of urban sociology in India was rather slow. The reasons for this can be attributed to many factors. If we look at the geographical differentiation of Indian land into rural and urban areas, we can see that the vast majority of the Indian population lives in the so-called rural areas. Populations in those areas, which are demarcated as urban, are only less than 30% (2001 census). This was one of the major factors which held against the requirement for a scientific discipline to study urban phenomena in India. But the majority criterion, however,

cannot annihilate the significant variations in the institutional and organisational behaviour of the people in the urban context (Rao 1991). Rao argues that the study of urban social structure and organisation is relevant in the context of wider theoretical problems of Indian society.

As you know, at present, the urban field is subjected to multidisciplinary research involving disciplines such as economics, geography, history, political science, and demography besides sociology. According to Rao a more direct source for a sociological study of urbanism and urbanisation come from the studies of sociologically relevant aspects of urban social life and of segments of urban population, relating to issues such as immigration, caste system, occupational segmentation, family organisation, politics and religion etc. The birth and growth, and the state of urban sociology in India as a distinct branch of sociology discipline can be examined by taking stock of the studies on urban social settings in India that contributed to the development of the discipline. Since it is beyond the scope of this unit to include all the sociologically relevant urban studies, we will limit our discussions to some selected areas that fall under urban sociology.

## 14.2 Urban Sociological Studies in India

The studies of towns and cities in India on aspects of urban social life are not too many. In India urban sociology developed as a branch of sociology, which itself is a comparatively young social science discipline. Professor Patrick Geddes, a notable town planner and sociologist, established the first department of sociology in the University of Bombay in 1920, around the time when studies about cities and city life were getting much attention due to the initiatives of the Chicago School. According to Patrick Geddes, cities are a concrete image of civilization. He initiated a few urban studies in India. Geddes wanted to revive indigenous customs and use them for modern town planning in India. He believed that social processes and spatial form are related and therefore by changing the spatial form it is possible to change social structure as well. Geddes wrote around forty town-planning reports in India between 1914 and 1924 at the behest of various institutions and government agencies, which were included in the work *Town Planning Towards City Development*. These not only put forward novel ideas about preserving and reviving Indian urban centres but were also an important archive about the status of Indian cities in the early decades of the twentieth century (Meller, Helen 1990).

Although Patrick Geddes initiated urban studies in India it took a few more decades for the subject to take off as an area of study. According to M.S.A. Rao the reasons for the neglect may be due to the predominant view among the sociologists that the distinction between rural and urban sociology is not meaningful due to its lower level of urbanisation and also due to the perception that there was no distinction between the traditional city and the village as both were elements of the same civilisation.

The three Trend Reports (D'Souza 1974, 1985; Kosambi 1994) commissioned by Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR) have reviewed the literature of urban studies in India since the 1950s. This gives a fair idea of the amount of work that had been done on urban social settings in India. In these reports in order to make the survey of urban sociological studies in India, the field of urban sociology has been divided into a number of subject areas to learn how far studies in each area have been made. These are urbanisation, city and region, urban functions, urban internal structure, emerging urban systems, urban social organisation, urban community development, urban social problems and urban planning.

The process of urbanisation and urbanism in India attracted the attention of scholars on and off since the 1950s. D'Souza (1974) observes that social scientists began to show real interest in urban studies after the 1951 census report, which revealed high growth of urban population in India. Max Weber, Arnold Toynbee, Milton Singer, Robert Redfield, G.S. Ghurye, Radhakamal Mukherjee, D.N. Majumdar and Gideon Sjoberg are a few scholars to name who showed interest in urban phenomena in India. Prof. G.S. Ghurye, successor of Patrick Geddes at University of Bombay, showed keen interest in studying the urban situation in India. He worked on the comparative and historical aspects of urbanisation and also studied rural-urban relations. He concentrated on the ecological, political and cultural aspects of ancient and medieval cities in the context of civilisation. This is reflected in his article *Cities of India* published in 1953. Max Weber (1962) has offered a comparative historical account of cities, with special attention to the institution of caste in the context of Indian cities. He argued that while the caste system accounted for the continuity of the main characteristics in traditional Indian cities, it obstructed the emergence of citizenry, social and legal equality, fraternisation and autonomy of modern Indian cities.

Sjoberg (1964) categorises Indian cities into pre-industrial and industrial considering industrialisation as the key variable. But Rao (1974) is of the opinion that the process of urbanization in India is complex and that categorisation of Indian cities on the basis of one factor will be too simplistic, although he agrees that British colonialism is a cut off point in the history of Indian urbanisation. Toynbee studies the location and shifting of capital cities. Redfield and Singer engaged in studying the organisation of great tradition in Indian cities, as well as the sacred geography and functions of Indian cities in terms of their cultural role.

Prof. Radhakamal Mukherjee initiated social ecological studies of Indian cities at Lucknow University. Besides sociologists, geographers have also contributed to the social ecological studies of towns and cities. Ecological studies may not be of much value to the sociologists, but they are a valuable source material to follow up both the social processes and implications of ecological phenomena (Rao 1991).

The 1971 census recorded a high rate of growth of urban population, which again attracted the interest of many more scholars into the study of cities and associated issues, which resulted in gaining fast development of urban sociology in India (D'Souza 1974). The problems of rural-urban migration, urban development, and other related areas such as demography, neighborhoods, slums, stratification, education, ethnic conflict and movements, kinship, religion, politics, economy, social problems, and impact of urbanization on rural areas attracted the attention of many sociologists and social anthropologists (Rao 1982). Thus, in 1970s there were some good studies on Indian urbanism (Ghosh (1973), Dimock and Inden (1970), Hambly (1968), King (1978), Saberwal (1978)). There were a number of important studies on urbanisation related social problems in towns and cities. Sociologically relevant studies on problems like prostitution, beggary, juvenile delinquency and slums in the urban context have been carried out both by social workers and urban sociologists. Many well-known slum studies were conducted (Desai and Pillai 1970, 1972, Wiebe 1975, D'Souza 1978, 1979) during this period. Several edited volumes of papers on urban themes were published as proceedings of a conference of special number of journals devoted to urban issues (Sandhu 2003). Demographic studies of towns and cities have been made based on the Census Reports and National Sample Surveys. Kingsley Davis, Ashish Bose,

Sovani and others have made significant contributions to urban demographic analysis. These studies enable us to know more about the magnitude and scale of urbanisation in our country. D'Souza observed that most of the studies conducted during the periods of 1950s, 60s and 70s are largely empirical generalisations about the urban phenomenon most of which lacked the rigour of scientific method (D'Souza 1985).

In the 1980s and afterwards there was a remarkable growth in urban studies, although certain areas received more attention (such as urbanization patterns and trends, migration studies, social problems in urban areas) in research, while other areas (metropolitisation, regional planning, spatial structure of cities) were not explored much. A number of studies have been conducted on urban problems of slums and squatter settlements in the 1980s (Misra and Gupta 1981, Rao and Rao 1984, Jha 1986, Kaldate 1989, Sandhu 1989) and in the 1990s (Rao, R.N. 1990, Das 1993, Desai 1995, De Wit 1996, Purewal 2000, Lobo and Das 2001).

#### Box 14.1 : Some Basic Questions in the Study of Urbanism and Urbanisation

"A Study of urban social structure and organisation, apart from contributing to a fuller understanding of Indian social institutions, has relevance in the context of wider theoretical problems. Urbanisation is a world-wide process and it has been considered not only as an index of economic development but also as an important factor of social change. It has been argued, on the basis of Western experience, that urbanisation means a breakdown of traditional social institutions and values. In the Indian context this means, among other things, that the caste system will change into the class system, nuclear families will emerge from joint families and religion will become highly secularized. These hypotheses assume that urbanisation in India is the same as Westernisation, and ignore the existence of traditional urbanization on which modern urbanization had its first impact. The "breakdown" hypotheses, therefore, mislead one into asking the wrong questions, while it would be more realistic to formulate the questions as follows : What changes have come about as a result of interaction between traditional and modern urbanisation? Which aspects of caste, kinship and religion have changed in the new urban context? What are the new forms of associations, relationships and interactions, that have emerged in the cities, and in what respects have the traditional ones got intermeshed with new forms of behaviour? What is the impact of such changes in the urban situation on rural life? These questions rightly focus on the changes in the traditional urban situation instead of taking the rural context as representing the traditional social institutions of India." (Rao, M.S.A, Bhat C. & Kadekar, L.N. (ed.) 1991:2).

There were some more government initiatives in the 1980s and 1990s in conducting urban studies. The National Commission on Urbanisation published its five-volume report. It highlighted the problems of urbanisation at the grassroots, sub-state and state level. The government of India encouraged the city studies for the preparation of a national report on the state of Indian cities as an after effect of the 1996 Istanbul conference on Habitat by UN's Center for Human Settlement (UNCHS). Moreover the National Urban Observatory established by the government of India is

planning to promote urban databases at the city level as a part of the local urban observatories in accordance with UNCHS guidelines and suggestions. Sandhu (2002) observes that all these efforts will provide a more congenial environment for urban studies in India.

In the preceding section we had seen the development of Urban Sociology in India by having an overview of the urban studies conducted since the 1920s. We have seen urban studies in India were concentrated on different aspects of evolution of the city and city life. Based on these different perspectives let us make a broad categorisation of urban studies and have a look at some of the studies in each of them.

#### Reflection and Action 14.1

If you are a city/town dweller then you choose a village near it and if you are a villager choose the nearest city/town near it. Observe the nature of family, kinship and marriage system practiced in your region and compare it with that of the other region. Write an essay of about three pages on the “Comparison of Rural and Urban Social Organisation” based on your observation.

Compare your essay with those of other learners at the Study Center.

### 14.3 Historical Comparative Studies

Urban studies have evoked much interest in historical and comparative perspectives on the origin and growth of cities or urban centers. Many scholars perceive cities in the wider context of the history of civilisation. Some even believe that history of civilisation should be written in terms of the history of cities and that the city is the symbol of civilisation. The history of India's urbanization is centuries old. Scholars have attempted to classify Indian pre-modern and modern cities based on different criteria such as function of the cities, size and population of the cities etc. According to Rao India's urbanism has essentially been shaped by three civilisations. The Hindu, during the early period; the Muslim, during the medieval period; and the Christian, during the modern period. The rulers representing these civilisations tried to impose elements of their culture on the urban life of India. Moreover, the urban settlement patterns in India often show juxtaposition of old and new. Thus historical perspective adds an important dimension to our understanding of the urban situation in India.

There are a handful of studies on urbanism in historical India. Authors such as A. Ghosh (*The City in Early Historical India* 1973) and M.S.A. Rao (*Traditional Urbanism and Urbanisation* 1974) have dealt with urbanism and cities in early historical India. In his essay Rao analyses the urban styles of lives and processes in pre-colonial India in the framework of civilization. He points out that there is not one Hindu civilisation or great tradition but a multiplicity of civilisations which accounted for varied urban institutions, styles and images in a situation of interaction. He describes varied patterns of urbanism and urbanisation in terms of ecological features, social organisation of religions, artistic, scientific, technological, economic and political activities and rural urban networks. In the context of urbanism and urbanisation in traditional India, he argues that the towns and villages formed a part of the civilisational process, with structural continuities and organisational differences.

There are other studies, which discuss various aspects of urbanism during the later periods of history. Edward C. Dimock and Robert B. Inden (*The City in Pre-British Bengal* 1970) described the cities in pre-British Bengal as gathered from the Mangala Kavya Literature. Gavin Hambly (*Cities of Mughal India* 1968) and Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi (*Urbanisation and Urban Centres Under the Mughals* 1971) dealt with cities and urbanization during the Mughal period. The influence of British colonial period on urban development in India also was an interesting theme for scholars of urban sociology. In his study Antony D. King (*Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment* 1976) examines the evolution of Delhi under British rule when it became the dual city. He looks out for the symbolic meanings and hidden values implicit in British approaches to urban design and planning. Satish Saberwal (*Indian Urbanism: A Socio-historical Perspective* 1978) has given some glimpses into Indian urbanism during the historical period. Meera Kosambi (*Three Colonial Port Cities in India* 1988) studies the urban morphology of the three colonial port cities of Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta, which according to her, share a distinctive pattern that is part of their colonial past. Basic features are a nucleus with a European-style fort and open esplanade, segregated, residential areas for Europeans and Indians, a central business district, and peripheral military and manufacture zones; the features that other cities lack.

The colonial city has always posed a problem in its conceptualisation because of different forms of colonial expansion and domination. Fox (*Tezibazaar: Colonial Town in Prismatic Society* 1977) argues that the colonial cities form a part of a type of state society called prismatic society. According to Fred Riggs (1964), such state societies are prismatic in that they combine pre-industrial and industrial institutions and refract them into new social forms. That means such urban centers are subjected to the impact of industrialisation under Western political and economic influence without getting industrialised themselves. Fox illustrates this in his case study of a small administrative town of Tezibazaar under the colonial era, particularly in the context of transition of its governance from the traditional elite, through British bureaucrats and their overlords, to the new elites elected through modern electoral machinery. He argues that the colonial rule fossilised the economic productivity and how the colonial industrial states economically exploited and politically subdued their colonial dependencies. Fox notes that prismatic society was earlier considered transitional between traditional and modern. But such societies have assumed a stability of permanency of their own.

A different approach to study colonial city is to study them in the Marxian framework of imperialism and exploitation and dependency theory. Moonis Raza and Atiya Habib in their study of *Characteristics of Colonial Urbanisation - A Case study of the Satellitic Primacy of Calcutta* examine the growth of Calcutta into satellitic primate of the metropolitan economy under the colonial situation. The authors emphasise the need to analyse the colonial urbanisation in the framework of the development of underdevelopment under imperialist exploitation since the processes of urbanisation are closely interrelated to those of economic development. According to them Calcutta, a satellitic primate, was neither able to sustain itself as a metropolis nor induce the development of its hinterland. Calcutta grew but did not develop during the colonial era and its growth was a reflection not of the healthy process of urbanisation but rather of the diseased process of urban assertion.

Yet coming back to the urban studies in historical perspective, there are some studies that deal with particular towns and cities in their historical

perspectives. B.C. Dutta (1970) and Devendra Handa (1970) provide brief historical descriptions of two of the ancient cities of Punjab, Sunet and Rupar respectively. Some of the major urban centers such as Ahmedabad (Gillian 1968), Varanasi (A.N. Singh 1969) and Calcutta (Sinha 1968) have also been viewed historically. The historical approach has also been adopted in studying certain aspects of the social organization of urban communities such as caste system in Madras during the period of British Merchant Government (Roche 1975), and the leadership in Bombay during the period 1840-1885 (Dobbin 1972). The relationship between the urban and rural areas has also been studied historically in a work dealing with Saurashtra (Spodek 1976 cf D'Souza 1985).

#### 14.4 Ecological studies

The historical events and the culture of the people in India played a pivotal role in shaping the existing ecological structures of Indian cities. Weinstein (1986) points out some prominent subjective elements that influence ecological structures in Indian cities. These are local cultural views, ethnic and caste loyalties, traditional segregation principles, particularistic canons of neighborhood desirability, and norms of intensive land use. If we look into the evolution of morphology of Indian cities, we can see that even the cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation were planned having formal layout in a regular grid. But the later cities, which grew around the temples or royal palaces within the fortress, were irregular and amorphous.

##### Reflection and Action 14.2

Take a map of an Indian city like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai etc. Find out the different functions of different areas in the map eg. residential colonies, institutional areas, corporate offices, etc. Choose the different residential areas in the map and find out about the socio-economic and occupational background of the people who stay in these colonies.

Write a report on the "Social Stratification and Structure of the City" in about three to five pages based on your map reading of the city chosen by you.

Discuss your report with those of other students at your Study Center.

The ancient texts and the archeological findings of ancient cities shed light to the ecological structure of Indian cities of ancient days. Political treatises like the *Arthashastra* and the works on architecture and design such as *Agnipurana*, the *Manasara*, and the *Sukranitisara* which date back to 500 B.C. to A.D. 300 have described in detail the norms pertaining to the spatial structure of different types of cities. The salient features of ancient cities were a fortress, religious institutions and the socio-economic separation of people into distinct neighborhoods or natural areas (Ghurye 1961 cf. Rao 1991). Though all the scriptures seem to provide a general pattern for the construction of cities there are certain slight variations. While *Arthashastra* prescribes the positioning of royal and administrative or the temple at the centre of the city *Agnipurana* specifies the temples at the corners of the city wall and the shops are to be at the centre of the city. As per *Sukranitisara*, an architectural treatise, the royal palace, court council buildings, museum and the residences of the officials shall be at the centre of the city (Berry and Spodek 1971). The residential pattern of different caste groups were also prescribed in these scriptures. The four varnas of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Shudra are to be grouped

respectively to the north, east, south and west of the royal palace and the outcastes outside the city walls.

Even during the pre-British period the urban centers in India showed power polarisation – with socially, financially and politically influential people at the center and less influential mass at the periphery as depicted in Sjoberg's (1955) model. With the advent of British colonialism and the sequential appearance of functionally distinct elements of military garrison, civil administration and railway colony in the Indian cities, marked changes in the settlement order of the native cities came (Smailes 1969). Even before independence itself the cleavages between different functional settlement units began to be blurred giving way to the social gradation of native society (Rao 1991).

The planned development of the post-independence period has brought about significant changes in the internal structure of the Indian cities (Rao 1991: 87). The government created a separate town-planning department to prepare the development plans of urban areas. The government also introduced western models of town planning to give a facelift to the Indian cities. The most noteworthy feature of urban planning of the post independence period was that there had been a clear cut separation of various land uses such as industrial, commercial, educational, institutional, administrative, residential etc. There was also an unprecedented growth in higher educational institutions, universities, and research institutions spreading over hundreds of acres in large cities (*Ibid*). Thus, there was a gradual change in the residential pattern of Indian cities during the post independence period.

Urban ecology and morphology of Indian cities became the subject matter of study for a good number of sociologists and geographers. The studies done on the residential pattern of Indian cities (Berry and Rees (1969), Singh (1975), Brush (1975, 1977) shows the changing urban way of life in the Indian cities, as well as the new segmentation pattern of the urban residential spaces on the basis of class and status. Prof. G.S. Ghurye and his students such as Bopegamage (1957), Venkatarayappa (1957), Rajagopalan (1962), Mohsin (1963) showed keen interest in studying the morphology and ecological structure of Indian cities. Since 1969 there had been a handful of studies on the ecological structure of various Indian cities based on the factorial ecological approach. Berry and Rees (1969), Weinstein (1974, 1986), Brush (1977, 1986) are a few to name.

Brian Berry and Philip Rees (1969) on the basis of a factor analysis and six other major cities in India observed that communal or religious and caste status is being transformed into class status, and this in turn has led to the dominant spatial pattern of high status neighbourhoods in central areas and low status on the periphery. Other studies also prove this inference. Other scholars such as N.K. Bose (1965) who studied Calcutta and Mehta (1968) who studied Poona city also agree with the findings of Berry and Rees on the residential segregation of distinct socio-economic groups. Brush (1975) from an analysis of the socio-economic structure of Bombay and Delhi perceives apart from the city center the residential colonies of elites (new elites specifically) are coming up in a sectoral fashion in the outer zones of the city.

Some of the studies dealing with the internal structure of cities delineate and describe different aspects of urban communities while certain others show how the structure has evolved. Some seek to explain the underlying factors in the changing structure such as land use pattern, land values, residential patterns etc. (D'Souza 1974). Gist (1957) studies the morphology

of Bangalore city using 1941 and 1951 census data. He found that caste, education and occupational characteristics are co-related and he believed that the impact of industrial technology, large-scale economic organization, modern transportation and western status values will bring about changes in the ecological structure of Bangalore. John E. Brush in his study *Morphology of Indian Cities* (1962) examines the relationships of the physical structure of Indian cities with the social aspects, in the light of the historical circumstances influencing their origins and evolution.

Arthur E. Smailes argues the historical development of two distinct parts of the city – the indigenous city and the British annexes resulted in dualism in the morphology of Indian cities. In many Indian cities the major morphological periods identified are pre-railway (pre-1853), railway-British (1853-1947) and the post independence. He also outlined the major morphological elements of India, cities as : a) old walled city, b) modern extramural extension, c) cantonment, d) civil lines, e) railway colony, f) post 1947 estates and residential colonies.

Many scholars adopted factorial ecology approach to analyse the ecological structure of various India cities. Factorial ecology approach is an improvement over social area analysis. In this method factor analytic techniques are used to identify the underlying structural dimensions from a set of socio-economic characteristics selected for variation in the structure. Berry and Spodek (1971) make an in-depth study of traditional styles of Indian culture as they affect residence patterns through a factor analysis of five Indian cities. They show that in cities under study the basis for residential segregation is transformed from caste to class status and in the course of this process, residual caste status and class status reinforce each other so that the dominant spatial pattern remains that of high status neighbourhoods in the central area and the low-status neighbourhoods in the periphery. They also noticed that the increasingly diverse bases of social and economic power that the modern India is generating transforming the urban structure.

Weinstein in his study *Subjective Components of Urban Ecological Structure: A Theoretical Statement and an Application to two Indian Cities* (1986) shows that the emerging ecological structure of Indian cities is not entirely based on objective components of city life. He argues that rather than the traditional objective features of urban ecological structure, like, physical distance, location of transport routes etc., the subjective elements of local cultural views, ethnic and caste loyalties, traditional segregation principles, particularistic canons of neighbourhood desirability etc. are more prominent in influencing urban ecological structure. Pragati Gihar (2003) analyses various elements of the spatial and social structures found in varying nature in different parts of the city. The work contributes to the theoretical understanding of the spatio-social structures prevalent in urban areas which may further point out the uneven degree of urbanization and its implications on the social and cultural life of the people living in different localities in the city

#### **14.5 Studies on Urbanisation and Urban Growth**

According to the 2001 Census, India is home to more than one-sixth of the world's population and 28% of its people live in urban areas. There are 35 urban agglomerations each with a population of more than one million, and about 37 per cent of the total urban population lives in these million-plus cities. The two largest – Mumbai (Bombay) and Delhi (including the capital, New Delhi) – had population of more than 9 million each. In the last 60 years the percentage of urban population to the total population

(urbanisation) doubled from 13.86 (1941) to 27.78% (2001). The absolute number of urban population (urban growth) increased even more.

Urbanisation in India is proceeding at a modest pace. According to the 2001 census, there has been an increase of 2.1 per cent in the proportion of urban population over the 1991 census. Urbanisation and urban growth are two different concepts. Urbanisation refers to the percentage of the total population, which is concentrated in urban settlements as well as to a rise in the percentage. Urban growth refers to the percentage increase in the absolute size of the urban population. The pattern of urbanisation and urban growth in India shows a relatively low rate of urbanisation and high rate of urban growth (Bose 1973).

As we said earlier urbanisation in India is not a new phenomenon. However, proper documentation of urban growth and related aspects began to be recorded along with the census survey only. The population growth in the cities as well as growth of market towns occurred during the colonial period due to increase in commerce and commercialisation of agriculture. The growth in small-scale industries resulted in the development of large towns. Cotton textiles and other industries caused the concentration on population location-based and in the development of urban centers. Thus there was a gradual growth of urban areas in India. The development of trade, commerce, industry, transport, communication and construction etc. all led to a faster rise in the percentage of urban population. There had been some good studies — Kingsley Davis (1951), Turner (1962), Huser (1957), Sovani (1966), Ashish Bose (1970, 1973, 1975, 1992, 1993, 1998, 2001), Fisher (1972), Singh (1973), Premi, M.K. (1985, 1994, 1996), Ramachandra, R. (1989), Rao (1986), Mishra, R.P. and Kamalesh Mishra (1998), Sandhu, R.K. (2003), Kundu A. (1994, 2000) Sivaramakrishnan et al (2005) — on the morphology of urbanisation in India concentrating of issues such as increased urban growth in larger cities, inter and intra city urban variations, migration patterns, urban governance etc. Most of the studies on urbanisation are based on census data.

The processes of urbanisation and urban growth have been studied by social scientists from various dimensions. The demographic studies concentrate on the rate of urban growth and related aspects. Studies on migration consider migration as significant factor in urbanisation. Urbanisation has far reaching effects on larger societal processes and social institutions such as family and kinship. Certain urban studies focused on this aspect also. Now let us see what are the issues covered in the urban studies of each of these areas.

#### **Box 14.2 Urban Studies with Policy Implications**

Policy oriented urban research has gained momentum in India during the post-independence period. Urban researchers turned their attention to this area due to the deterioration of civic amenities in the urban centers which resulted from the increased concentration of urban population, industrial and tertiary activities in a few large cities. The thrust of these studies was to give direction to the future urban growth in the country. A provision for making a Master Plan for metropolitan cities was included in the Third Five Year Plan. Several government-sponsored studies were conducted based on the analysis of land use and socio-economic structure to prepare development plans.

Most of these studies adopted a holistic approach towards the study of cities studying various aspects at the same time. The Master Plans developed based on these studies were not so successful. Moreover the growing complexity of city economy and that of managing the infrastructure and public utilities revealed the inadequacies of the holistic approaches and prompted the scholars to focus on particular segments of the economy on specific problems. A good number of studies had been undertaken in the 1970s and 1980s (Agarwal 1976, Srivastava 1976, Papola 1981, Subramaniam 1982) that restrict their scope to one or a few sectors of micro economy.

**Source:** (Kundu, A. 1992)

**Urban Demographic Studies:** Kingsley Davis (1951) is one of the foremost to study the urbanisation pattern in India using census data. Although his predictions did not prove to be correct, he made an attempt to predict the future course of urbanisation and urban growth with the turn of the century in India. N.V. Sovani (1966) in his study *Urbanisation and Urban India* argued that while Indian urbanisation had many resemblances in form to that of the West, it differed from the latter in content. For him the process of urbanisation plays a socially dynamic role and it will continue to do so. In *Urbanisation in India* (1970) Ashish Bose analysed the pattern of urbanisation, its structural characteristics and some related problems. The focus of examination for K.C. Zacharia was the role played by internal migration in the process of urbanisation. For this purpose he analysed the census data since 1901. Ashok Mitra (1967) in his paper *A Functional Classification of Towns in India* attempts to make a composite classification of towns using a triangular coordinate technique on the basis of industrial classification of workers in the 1961 census. P.B. Desai (1969) studies the changes in the size and sex composition of India's population over a period of sixty years using census data. The work examines the relationship of sex composition with other demographic variables like age structure, migration, working force and the geographical distribution of urban population.

Ashish Bose did a good number of urbanisation studies from the demographic perspective. *Urbanisation In India* (Prakasha Rao 1983) deals with the process of urbanisation in India. Giriraj Gupta analyses the major components of urban social organisation such as structure, growth, culture migration, slums and various forms of mobility and interaction. Lakshmi Narayan (1986) examines the historical and demographic dimensions of the growth of metropolitan cities in India. Weinstein, J. (1992 *Urban growth in India: Demographic and Socio-cultural prospects*) studies the numerical and qualitative aspects of the growth of the Indian urban population with the benefit of data from the last 4 censuses of 1951–1981. Roy, B.K. (1993 *Urban Growth in India: Its contemporary Relevance*) examines the urban growth in India in general with relevance to urban agglomerations of major significance on the basis of the Census of 1991. Debnath Mookherjee and Hoerauf (2004 *Cities in Transition: Monitoring Growth Trends in Delhi Agglomeration 1991-2001*) studies the differential growth pattern of peripheral urban centers of Delhi urban agglomeration in terms of size and location relative to the core units utilising the census data for the period of 1991-2001. He examines the number and growth of census towns and urban core and indicates a change in the urban structure of Delhi urban agglomeration.

**Urbanisation and Migration:** Migrants constitutes a sizable section of urban India. Rural to urban migration is a principal source of urbanisation. There had been studies on the streams and patterns of migration in India by urban sociologists. Ashish Bose (1973) presented some data for different migration streams for 1961 and 1971 utilising the respective census data. Ashok Mitra (1968) and Narain, V. (1976) studied the 1961 census to bring out some special features of rural to urban migration and their implications for rural—urban relations. Chatterjee, A. (1974) makes a comparative study of migration streams in 1961 and 1971. Premi (1980) too makes a comparative study but has concentrated on female migrants.

Chatterjee, M. (1971) has shown that the stability of migration is a function of distance from the native place as well as of occupational status. The longer the distance from the native place, the greater the percentage of migrants who regard their stay in the city as temporary, and relatively more migrants from the lower prestige occupations than those from the higher occupations regard their stay in the city as temporary. It is also argued that the volume of migration tends to decrease with the increase in distance and that at shorter distances females are more migratory than males, but at longer distances males are more migratory than females. Singh, J.P. (1984) examines and proves these theoretical arguments with regard to rural to urban migration, based on census data, in the states of Kerala and West Bengal in a comparative manner. Premi and Tom (1985) examined the phenomenon of migration to Indian cities using 1971 census data. They focused on the city characteristics of size, growth rate, functional specialisation etc. In another study M.K., Premi (1986) in *Migration to Cities in India* analyses the phenomenon of migration in the growth of class 1 cities.

Migration does not take place at random, but it follows certain patterns. S.N. Singh and K.N.S. Yadava (1974) studied the rural migrants to urban areas and pointed out that the number of migrants to a place at a given point of time is related to the number of migrants at an earlier point of time. K.N.S. Yadava (1987, 1988) further studied the volume, pattern, detriments and consequences of rural urban migration in India. Selvaraj and Rao (1993) studied consequences of rural urban migration.

**Impact of Urbanisation on Social Institutions:** The family structure and the intra and inter family relations are affected by the process of urbanisation. The cross cultural influence in the urban areas and its diverse nature in terms of ethnic, religious, linguistic, etc., backgrounds leads to the breaking of the old community bonds and formation of new relationships. There had been studies conducted on urban families by scholars. Studies by I.P. Desai (1964), Kapadia, K.M. (1969), A.D. Ross have pointed out that urban joint family is gradually replaced by nuclear family with the shrinking of family size and confining the kinship relation to two or three generation only. It has been shown that though the structure of urban family is changing, the spirit of individualism is not growing in the families (I.P. Desai 1964). Desai in his study observed that though most of the families are residentially nuclear, functionally and in terms of property they are joint. Apart from these, Ross found through her study (1961) that in urban settings the typical form of family unit is small joint family. Moreover the relations with one's distant kin is weakening or breaking. And the households seem to be more of an egalitarian kind rather than concentrating around the head of the family as seen in the traditional patriarchal family. Even in the midst of such changes the family ethos remain more or less the same.

Sylvia Vatuk who has done research on the India family and kinship system in urban settings maintains that the ideal of family jointness is upheld in urban settings although living may be separate. The extended family acts as a ceremonial unit and close ties with the agnatic extended family are maintained. She also finds that there is an increasing tendency towards individualising marital bond and decline of practices such as levirate widow inheritance, widow remarriage, marriage by exchange, polygyny etc. Thus, features such as diminishing family size, reductions in functions of family, emphasis on conjugal relationship etc. are pointed out as the major changes of urban family structure.

But there are views which go in opposition to this argument. Conklin (1976) in his study *The Household in Urban India* makes a factor analysis of household composition using census data in Karnataka state and reveals that urbanisation is not associated with a decline in complex households. The census data show urban household size increasing as fast in India as rural household size and the urbanite and the villager are equally in favor of the joint household in practice and in theory. It is concluded that the relationship between urbanisation and household composition in India is neither simple nor is the process unidirectional.

## 14.6 Urban Poverty, Housing and Slums

Poverty in India is a widespread phenomenon seen both in rural and urban areas. The poor in cities suffer from various deprivations such as lack of access to employment; adequate housing and infrastructure; and social protection and lack of access to health, education and personal security etc. Slums or hutment dwellings have become an inevitable part of the urban landscape and living place for the urban poor in India. Non-availability of accommodation near the workplace, high cost of land, and inability to pay rent have forced several millions of urban residents to take shelter in slums. Many of these slums are awful, devoid of basic amenities like water supply, electricity, sewerage, bathroom, toilet, etc., (Rao 1991). Urban poverty, housing and slums have attracted the attention of social scientists of all streams.

Studies focusing on the problem of urban slums began in the late 1950s. In the late fifties and early sixties the Planning Commission studied the problems of slums and housing. But these primarily were statistical analyses of housing, emphasizing the gravity of the problem. Bharat Sevak Samaj's study on the slums of old Delhi (1958) was the first major work on an Indian slum. A lot more studies followed by different authors studying the problem of urban poverty and housing in different urban centers situated in various States in India. Dandekar and Rath in their study *Poverty in India* (1970) point out that in the urban context, poverty and slums intersect with each other. Most people who are poor live in slums and most of the slum dwellers are poor. According to them urban poverty is an extension of rural poverty and the proportion of urban poor is far more than the corresponding proportion of rural poor. And their argument was that solving the problem of rural poverty could solve the problem of urban poverty as well.

There had been other studies which examined the problem of urban poverty from the standpoint of the urban poor and slum dwellers. Andrea Manefee Singh and Alfred De Souza (1980) compile several papers systematically on slum and pavement dwellers in some of the metropolitan cities and other urban centres. Victor D'Souza (1978) formulates a new theory of urban slums and poverty in India. He attributes the genesis and the persistence

of the problem of urban poverty to the fact that the poor and slum dwellers are, by and large, socio-culturally marginal to the dominant sections of the community in which they live. This approach shifts the responsibility for the solution of the problem from the victims to the society.

There had been studies analysing different dimensions of urban poverty such as avenue of employment available to the urban poor (Van Den Bobaert (1978), Sethuraman, S.V. (1978)), nutritional levels of urban poor (Judith Katona (1978)). There had also been a number of descriptive studies on slum life, some of which aimed at testing the prevailing notions about the urban poor and others yielding some important and interesting generalizations. Paul Wiebe (1975 and 1978) in his study on Madras slums concludes that some of the negative assumptions about the urban poor that they suffer from the culture of poverty, that slum life is socially disorganized, that there is a duality between slum and non-slum people and so on, do not hold good in the case of this population. M.K.A. Siddiqui (1969) and Owen M. Lynch (1974) also confirm this argument. Scholars such as Tapan Mazumdar (1978), Khatu (1977), Ratna Naidu (1978) Venkatarayappa (1976) studied the situations of urban poor in various cities.

There were a number of studies on the situation of poverty and slum and housing of Mumbai city. Vandana Desai's research (1995) tries to discover the intricacy of the social fabric and political dynamics of Mumbai slums. Studies by Jha S.S. (1986 *Structure of Urban Poverty: The Case of Bombay Slums*), Jeremy Seabrook (*Life and Labour in a Bombay Slum* 1987) are also some significant ones in this regard. Kalapana Sharma (2000) describes and views from a different angle the life in Dharavi, Asia's largest slum intuited in Mumbai, the city where half the population lives in slums. In situated discussing Dharavi Sharma narrates the way the city developed through migrations and settlements, displacements and resettlements, its shape, both geographical and metaphorical, driven by an elite who carved out for themselves the core, hugged all the urban services to themselves and relegated the underclass to the periphery, displacing them through demolitions, as they once again reclaimed the periphery and poverty to make it their core. The author looks at Dharavi as representing Mumbai's real cosmopolitanism, a place where people from different regions of India have forged new identities and lives through sheer grit and determination (Hindu 2000).

#### 14.7 Caste, Class and Ethnic Formations

People who migrate into urban centers belong to different caste, class, language and regional backgrounds. In a country like India where tradition and culture provide primordial identities, immigrants tend to maintain their ethnic identities in the urban settings too. So also social organisations such as caste, class, region, language etc. plays a significant role in Indian urban social formation making ethnicity an inevitable part of the Indian urban environment. The ethnic groups maintain their distinct identity in the midst of the social and cultural heterogeneity of the city life. Sociologists had been attracted to study the nature and dynamics of ethnic formations in Indian cities.

M.S. Gore (1970) examines the degree of adjustment and integration of south Indian migrants in the city of Bombay. Vijaya Punekar (1969) analysed inter group interaction and boundary maintenance among the various ethnic groups formed on the basis of linguistic and regional identities in Bangalore. She found manifest neighbourhoods only among one's own

linguistic or regional group. The issue of integration of south Indian migrants were studied by Andrea Menefee Singh (1979) in Delhi and Nair, K.S. (1978) in Poona. In both the studies it has been found that the majority of the migrants belong to the high caste Brahmins and they have white collar jobs. In both the places the migrants have not imbibed the mode of life of the local members, instead they recreated in the host communities the conditions of their home communities. Susan Lewandowski (1983) studied on the ethnic formations of Kerala migrants in the city of Madras. The studies of later period (Syed Ali 2003) show that more than caste or class, regional and linguistic affinity forms the basis of ethnic formations in urban areas. Gopa Sabharwal (2006) in her study *Ethnicity and Class: Social Divisions in an Indian City*, attempts to define the concept ethnicity in the urban context.

## 14.8 Conclusion

In this unit we have seen the origin and development of Urban Sociology through the studies done by sociologists on urban social realities in India. For this purpose we carried out briefly a review of research done on urban settings. Although some scientific studies began in the 1920s, major contributions in this field commenced around the 1950s. Social scientists started showing keen interest in the urban phenomena and various related social issues after the publication of the 1950 census report, which showed an enormous urban growth. There had been studies on various dimensions of urban phenomena. From the quantum of work done in the area it can be said that urban sociology has been established as a distinct branch of Sociology now.

## 14.9 Further Reading

Rao, M.S.A. (ed.) 1991. A Reader in Urban Sociology Orient Longman: New Delhi.

## **Unit 15**

### **Level, Trends and Patterns**

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- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Urbanization and Levels of Urbanization: Concepts
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- 15.7 Changing Urban Employment Market and its Impact on Urbanization
- 15.8 Conclusion
- 15.9 Further Reading

#### **Learning Objectives**

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the concept of urbanization and levels of urbanization
- describe the urban growth and its trends in India
- Classify towns by size and differential trends of urbanization
- discuss the inter-state variation in urbanization
- describe a model of West Bengal in this context and, finally
- discuss the changing urban employment market and its impact on urbanization

#### **15.1 Introduction**

Urbanization is commonly understood as a process by which an area and its population assume “urban” character or features. The Population Census in India accords “urban” status to a settlement when at least 70 per cent of its male workers are engaged in the non-agricultural sector and when it satisfies some other standards regarding size and density of population. When an area grows in size, density, and heterogeneity and assumes urban social, cultural, economic, ecological, physical and political features and declared as “urban” by the State administration it is called urban. Some ideal-type features, which are generally taken as urban include non-agricultural occupations, a big size population in a given area, high density of population, social and cultural

heterogeneity of population, large-scale division of labour, an economy based primarily on industry, commerce, tourism, concentration of facilities like modern communication and transportation, banking, education, health, sports, courts, administration, concentration of urban civic amenities like power and water supply, sanitation, garbage clearance, parking, market complexes, parks, play grounds, community halls, theatre halls and similar other facilities for public use, urban association based on contractual relations rather than kinship or primordial relations, erosion or breakdown of traditional values and norms and rise of new set of values, morality and norms (which are rationalistic in nature), and a municipal or corporation administration, with provisions of democratic decentralism and urban citizenship. Such general features of the “urban” are called ideal typical because there is no fixity or concreteness of the levels to these features to be called urban and even in the absence of some of these features a particular area could be accorded urban status. Urbanization is actually a process where a non-urban area becomes urban and a less urban area becomes more urban by assuming more and more of these features. In the process of urbanization the urban people or the urbanites, and the new entrants to the urban center get attuned to urbanism, or the urban way of life.

It is however debatable if there is only one particular way to urban life. The non-European sociologists and anthropologists have argued that the characterization of urban, as has been done above, is primarily Western and suffers from Western ethnocentrism. Empirical studies of the African and Asian urban situations have confirmed that there could be non-Western modes and levels of urbanization as well, where each country would have their historical and contextual specificities, and some degree of continuation of their cultural, social and political traditions, and the level of economic and technological developments could also be different. The traditional social and cultural forms are expected to continue in the urban areas. The level of civic amenities, the physical looks of the cities, the structural arrangements, the level of consumerism would also be different from those in the Western cities, although the influence of Western modernity or post modernity in the cities of the less developed countries could also be felt.

## **15.2 Urbanization and Levels of Urbanization: Concepts**

The level of urbanization is often defined in terms of proportion of urban population to total population. This measure of urbanization attaches great value to the human and social dimensions of urbanization as well. There are, however, two more important measures of urbanization. The first one is that the towns serve the rural people in terms of socio-economic change and the larger the rural people served by each town, on an average, the lower the level of urbanization. Alternatively, when no rural people are left to be served by town urbanization is taken to have reached its zenith. The second measure of urbanization concerns the distance that the rural people have to cover to reach the nearest urban center. The greater the distance, lower the level of urbanization. Because such a situation would mean urban centers are fewer in number and the distance between the urban centers is quite high. In a state with well-developed urban network people cover smaller distances to reach the urban centers (Ramachandran, 1989: 121-122).

## **15.3 Urban Growth in India: Trends**

Put against the level of urbanization in the world India's urbanization level is still low, although urbanization has gained some speed in the post-independence period. From the 1990 data we can see that 42.7 per cent of world population was living in urban areas. There was wide gap in the level of urbanization between the more developed regions, which had 72.7 per cent of the population as urban population, and the less developed regions, with only 33.9 per cent of urban population. Among the continents Europe, Oceania and Latin America had a very high level of urbanization with 73.1, 70.9 and 72.3 per cent of their population as urban population respectively. In contrast, Africa with 34.5 per cent of its population as urban population and Asia with only 29.9 per cent of its population as urban population were the least urbanized among the continents. Again, among the Asian regions Western Asia is more urbanized (with 58.2 per cent of its population living in urban areas) than Eastern Asia (29.4 per cent), Southeastern Asia (29 per cent) and South Asia (27.8 per cent) (for details see Mitra, 1994: 48). Thus South Asia, of which India is a part, is one of the least urbanized regions of the world. According to 1991 census only 25.72 per cent of India's population was living in urban areas, which again is less than the South Asian standard.

The annual growth rate of urban population in India has declined from 3.1 per cent during 1981-91 to 2.7 per cent during 1991-2001. The decade 1971-81 had recorded the highest annual growth rate of 3.8 per cent but the last two decades have recorded decelerating growth rates in India. The percentage of urban population has gone up from 23.73 in 1981 to 25.72 in 1991 and finally to 27.78 in 2001. The slow growth of urban population in India goes against popular notions of “urban explosion” and against the most expert predictions. The Planning Commission (1983), the Expert Committee for Population Projections for the Eighth Plan, and the UN Study of World Urbanization Prospects (1995, 2001) had predicted 3 – 4.4 per cent annual growth of urban population in the 1980s and 1990s. The UN projection of 3.2 per cent growth during 2000-10 and 2.8 per cent during 2020-25 also seem to be unrealistic. Keeping in view that the growth rate of total population is expected to be less than 1 per cent according to UN projection it would require a very high rate of rural-urban migration to meet the projected level of urbanization.

By way of explanation to the sluggish growth of urban population the scholars argue that not only the natural growth rate of urban population has declined but also the city bound migration of both male and female population has decelerated over the years. A study in 1983 suggests that contribution of rural-urban migration to urbanization declined over the decades and stood at 22.6 percent in the 1980s. During 1971-81 the percentage of intercensal migrants in urban areas declined from 18.5 to 16.9 and that of lifetime migrants (male) from 33.6 to 32.4. The share of lifetime interstate migrants came down from 11.2 per cent to 10.0 per cent. The 1991 Census also recorded further decline in urban-bound migration rate. In the 1981-91 decade the decadal, lifetime and interstate migration rates were 11.7, 26.0 and 8.0 respectively. The female migration to the urban areas, which takes place primarily due to social and cultural factors, also slowed down during the decade.

**Table 1: Number of towns and growth of urban population over census years**

Census year	Number of towns	% of urban to total population	Annual growth
1901	1827	10.84	-
1911	1915	10.29	0.03
1921	1949	11.18	0.79
1931	2072	11.99	1.75
1941	2250	13.86	2.77
1951	2843	17.29	3.47
1961	2365	17.97	2.34
1971	2590	19.91	3.21
1981	3378	23.34	3.83
1991	3768	25.72	3.09
2001	4368	27.78	2.73

Source: Census of respective years

Amitabh Kundu has identified four major reasons for the growth of urban population in India: (a) natural increase, (b) growth of new towns outside agglomerations, (c) merging of towns and jurisdictional changes in agglomerations, and (d) rural-urban migration. Available data suggest that natural increase accounted for 61.3 per cent and 59.4 per cent of the total increase in urban population in 1971-81 and 1981-91 decades respectively. The 1991-2001 decade too experienced a decline in natural growth rate of urban population. The share of component (b) in the total addition to urban population has declined from 9.4 per cent in the 1980s to 6.2 percent in the 1990s. This indicates that the rate of urban growth outside the existing agglomerations and urbanized regions has slowed down over the decades. The third component, i.e., extension of municipal boundaries, merging of old towns or inclusion of new towns in the existing urban agglomerations, was considered a minor contributor to the growth of urban population in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The number of towns merged with existing neighbouring towns was only 221 in 2001 and in 1991 the number was half of this. However, the share of this factor to the growth of urban population went up from 7.6 per cent in 1991 to 13.0 percent in 2001. The contribution of the fourth factor has been estimated to be 21 per cent in 1990s, which was marginally less than the figure for the previous decade. (Kundu, 2005: 105).

### **Classification of towns by size and differential trends of urbanization**

On the basis of population size the Census of India has placed towns into six categories:

- Class I town – 1,00,000 or more
- Class II towns – From 50,000 to 99,999
- Class III towns – From 20,000 to 49,999
- Class IV towns – From 10,000 to 19,999
- Class V – From 5,000 to 9,999
- Class VI – Below 5,000

**Table 2: Distribution of towns by category and census year**

tux.kuk	Js kh I	Js kh II	Js kh III	Js kh IV	Js kh V	Js kh VI
1901	24	43	130	391	744	479
1911	23	40	135	364	707	485
1921	29	45	145	370	734	571
1931	35	56	183	434	800	509
1941	49	74	242	498	920	407
1951	76	91	327	608	1124	569
1961	102	129	437	719	711	172
1971	148	173	558	827	623	147
1981	218	270	743	1059	758	253
1991	300	345	947	1167	740	197
2001	393	401	1151	1344	888	191

Source: Census of India for respective years

Table 2 suggests that the number of large cities and medium towns (Class I to Class IV) has grown significantly over the decades while the number of smaller towns in Class V and Class VI has remained either stagnant or declined. The other trend is that growth in number of cities before independence was rather slow and the number started increasing at a faster rate in the post-independence period; the increase is particularly remarkable from 1951 census. Intensification of developmental activities in and around the large towns, investment in industrial production, increase of commerce, the increase in agricultural productivity and evolution of smaller towns into bigger ones explain the relatively faster urbanization in the post-independence period. This also explains the reason behind the faster growth of larger cities and towns. Apart from rural-urban migration from smaller towns to bigger ones has contributed to the faster growth of larger towns. Migration of people from East and West Pakistan and from other neighbouring countries has also contributed to the faster urban growth in the post-independence period.

India being relatively advanced economy it has drawn migrants from poverty infested Bangladesh and Nepal. The explosive demographic pressure in Bangladesh is continually ejecting a significant part of its labour force to India even in recent years.

**Table 3: Urban population in towns of different categories**

tux.kuk	Js kh I	Js kh II	Js kh III	Js kh IV	Js kh V	Js kh VI
1901	26.00	11.29	15.64	20.83	20.14	6.10
1911	27.48	10.51	16.4	19.73	19.31	6.57
1921	29.70	10.39	15.92	18.29	18.67	7.03
1931	31.20	11.65	16.8	18.00	17.14	5.21
1941	38.23	11.42	16.35	15.78	15.08	3.14
1951	44.63	9.96	15.72	13.63	12.97	3.09
1961	51.42	11.23	16.94	12.77	6.87	0.77
1971	57.24	10.92	16.01	10.94	4.45	0.44
1981	60.37	11.63	14.33	9.54	3.58	0.50
1991	65.20	10.95	13.19	7.77	2.60	0.29
2001	68.67	9.67	12.23	6.84	2.36	0.23

Source: Census of India for respective years

Data presented in Table 3 further substantiate the top-heavy trend of urbanization. While the percentage share of total urban population Class I cities has grown substantially from 26 in 1901 to 68.67 in 2001 the population share of towns of all other categories has declined. The worst sufferers in the process are Class IV, V, and VI towns.

The higher growth rate of Class I cities is due to expansion of area and immigration. The emergence of large satellite towns in close proximity and their subsequent integration into the city agglomeration has helped faster growth of Class I cities. Most importantly, the concentration of production and commercial activities, and development of infrastructure-base have attracted migrants of different economic classes from the far-flung places (Kundu, 2005: 107).

During 1981-1991, the metropolitan cities (cities with more than one million population) grew by 3.25 per cent per annum against 2.83 per cent growth rate of other towns. During 1991-2001, however, the growth rate of the metropolitan towns has slowed down to 2.88 and for the common towns the rate has been 2.6 per cent. The share of population of the million plus cities was 26.4 per cent in 1981, which has gone up to 32.5 per cent in 1991

and to 37.8 per cent in 2001. The metropolitan cities have grown at a faster rate than class I cities as well as towns of other categories.

The growth rate of capital cities (state as well as national) is also high. During 1981-91 the growth rate of capital cities was at par with that of the million plus cities, the growth being 33.6 per cent in the decade. However, the percentage share of population of the capital cities to total urban population increased marginally from 25.7 in 1991 to 25.9 in 2001.

Thus despite the higher growth rate of the class I cities, metropolitan cities and capital cities it is not difficult to notice the slight decline in the growth rate of these cities in the last decade in particular. Fall in the government investment in the urban infrastructure, decline in the public sector, fall in the natural growth of population and dwindling migration could be some of the reasons that can explain the relative slump in the growth in the bigger cities in recent years.

### **15.5 Inter-State Variation in Urbanization**

Since the forces of urbanization are unequally distributed the level and pattern of urbanization in the States and Union Territories of Indian federation vary widely. Following the 2001 Census it is observed that the States that are economically developed experience higher rate of urbanization and account for a larger share of urban population. Thus six relatively developed states, namely, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and West Bengal together account for more than half the total urban population of the country. The percentage share of urban population of all these states is higher than the national average of 27.78, according to 2001 census. The share of urban population of less developed States with less per capita income is much less than the national average.

Following the findings of 2001 Census we can classify the Indian States and Union Territories into three groups depending upon the levels of urbanization: Group A consisting of States and UTs with higher level of urbanization (with an urban population higher than the national average of 27.72 per cent), Group B consisting of States and UTs with moderate level of urbanization (more than 20 per cent but less than the national

average), and Group C consisting of States and UTs with low level urbanization (with less than 20 per cent urban population to total population of the State or UT).

### **Group A**

Delhi (93.01), Goa (49.77), Gujarat (37.35), Haryana (29.00), Karnataka (33.98), Maharashtra (42.4), Mizoram (49.5), Punjab (33.95), Tamil Nadu (43.86), West Bengal (28.03), Andaman and Nicobar Islands (32.67), Chandigarh (89.78) Daman & Diu (36.26) Lakshadweep (44.47) and Pondicherry (66.57). The figures within the parenthesis indicate percentage share as urban population in the respective State or UT.

### **Group B**

Arunachal Pradesh (20.41), Chattisgarh (20.08), Jammu & Kashmir (24.88), Jharkhand (22.25), Kerala (25.97), Madhya Pradesh (26.67), Manipur (23.88), Rajasthan (23.38), Uttar Pradesh (20.78), Uttarakhand (25.59), and Dadra & Nagar Haveli (22.89).

### **Group C**

Assam (12.72), Bihar (10.47), Himachal Pradesh (9.97), Meghalaya (19.63), Nagaland (17.74), Orissa (14.97), Sikkim (11.1) and Tripura (17.02).

With four of the seven North-East Indian States figuring in Group C, it may be said that this part of India is least urbanized. Two of the relatively economically backward East zone States namely Bihar and Orissa too are among the States with low level of urbanization. Earlier, following the trend up to 1981, Ramachandran had observed that urbanization is at a lower level in states of North-East and in the Ganga plains of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and in Orissa. In general terms, he observed, ‘western and southern India are relatively highly urbanized while eastern and northern India are least urbanized’ (Ramachandran, 1989: 123). In recent years while some of the earlier trends continue it is not difficult to see that the north Indian states and even some of North-East states are experiencing urbanization at a faster rate.

#### **Reflection and Action 15.1**

If you live in a city or town, find out which category A, B or C it belongs to in terms of the level of urbanization it has. If you live in a village, find out whether it is developing the features of urban area or not in terms of its social, economic, occupational structure.

Write a note on “The Level of Urbanization in My town/City/Village” based on your finding in about two pages. Share your note with other students at your study centre.

During the 1991-2001 decade the urban population in India has grown by 2.27 per cent annually. Among the states which have recorded a high growth rate (i.e, more than 3 per cent annually) in the last decade are Arunachal Pradesh (7.00 per cent), Assam (3.09 per cent), Chattisgarh (3.09), Delhi (4.14), Goa (3.32), Haryana (4.11), Jammu & Kashmir (3.44), Meghalaya (3.16), Mizoram (3.27), Nagaland (5.27), Punjab (3.19), Sikkim (4.83), Tamil Nadu (3.56), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (4.40), Chandigarh (3.40), and Dadra & Nagar Haveli (14.59). There is none among the States that has recorded a negative growth. Among the UTs, however, Lakshadweep has recorded a negative growth of -0.77 per cent. It is noteworthy that some of the States with low level of urbanization figure among the States which have been experiencing higher rate of urbanization in recent years, while many of the States with higher level of urbanization (i.e, many of the Group A States) are experiencing urban deceleration. Among the major States that have experienced very low rate of annual growth in the last decade are Andhra Pradesh (1.37), Kerala (0.74), Manipur (1.21) and West Bengal (1.84).

The trend however was different until 1991 of the post-independence period. The states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Punjab already had high concentration of urban centers and urban population but the rate of urban growth was either medium or low. On the other hand, the relatively backward States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa registered higher growth rate despite the fact that these States had lower share of urban population. As an exception to this trend, economically advanced states like Haryana and Maharashtra had both higher rate of growth and higher share of urban population. Overall, the trend until 1991 negates the positive correlation between economic development and urban growth. We have to look for other factors to explain this puzzle. Possibly, higher incidence of rural poverty, regular occurrence of natural disasters like drought and flood can also cause higher incidence of rural-urban migration and hence higher rate of urban growth. The post-independence dualism in the urbanization pattern, according to Kundu (2005: 108), be partially be attributed to ‘ ...

government investment in the district and *taluka* headquarters, programmes of urban industrial dispersal, and transfer of funds from the states to local bodies through a need based or what is popularly known as “a gap filling” approach’. The “lack of diversification in agrarian economy” in these backward States also, as Kundu suggests, has contributed to higher urban growth.

In the 1990s, with the economic liberalization gaining momentum, there has been significant investment of foreign and corporate capital and expansion of commercial activities in the economically advanced States. This precisely explains why the rate of urbanization is high in Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra and Gujarat. In Karnataka and West Bengal the rate of urbanization is relatively low among these highly urban states because these states, and particularly West Bengal, has been following a policy of urban dispersal. The introduction of land reforms, infrastructure development of small and medium sized towns, dispersal of production activities, introduction of panchayats have probably put a check on the rate of urbanization and city-bound movement of population. We have therefore considered the West Bengal case separately in the following section.

## **15.6 West Bengal Model**

India is a vast country and its economic and social development is marked by huge regional disparities. The concentration of resources (both natural and human), the historicity of the region, the geographical location of the state and proximity to international borders, cross-border migration, the level of agricultural and industrial development, the initiatives of the state government are some of the major factors that influence the level of urbanization of that region. The end result is that there are different patterns and levels of urbanization in different parts of the country.

West Bengal is one of the States, which has higher urban growth. In the last decade the growth rate for India was 25.71 per cent, but for West Bengal it was 27.40 per cent. In contrast to the rest of the country, where urban growth is large city-centric in West

Bengal the trend of migration to metropolis has been arrested. In 1970s 70 per cent of State's urban population lived in Calcutta but in 1991 the share of metropolitan population has declined to 59 per cent; the cities and towns other than Calcutta together have a share of 41 per cent of the urban population in the State. Between 1971 and 1991 the number of class –I cities (with more than one lakh population) has doubled from 148 to 296 but in West Bengal the number of class-1 cities has grown five times and large cities can now be seen in the distant districts from Calcutta. During the same period the number of municipalities has grown by 43 per cent. As an impact of the spread of urbanization all over the State there has been a significant achievement in terms of control of natural growth rate of urban population. According to 1991 figures, West Bengal had a decadal natural growth of 8.2 per cent against the national rate of 14.4 per cent. Between 1981 and 1991 the natural growth rate in Maharashtra was 14.7 per cent and in Tamil Nadu it was 11.2 per cent.

The balanced urban growth and urban spread have been possible primarily of two factors: first, land reforms, rural development through *panchayats* and the resultant rise in agricultural production, and (2) decentralized urbanization through the development of small and medium-sized towns. Between 1980-81 and 1990-91 food-crop production in West Bengal grew by 5.9 per cent against the national average of 2.8 per cent. Agricultural growth has helped expansion of rural markets and increase of earning opportunities. The calorie intake of average villager in West Bengal was less than the national average in 1972-73 but in 1993-93 the average calorie intake of rural people in West Bengal has exceeded the national average by 209 kilo calorie. As a result of a distinct rise in the quality of life in rural areas the rate of rural-urban movement has been largely controlled over the years.

With a view to achieve balanced urbanization the Government of West Bengal is now focusing on (a) decentralized urban growth, (b) participation of people, especially the people of economically backward classes and women in urban planning and in execution of development programmes, (c) democratic decentralization, and transparent and responsible urban administration, (d) development of small and medium towns and rural

development, (e) reduction of the gap between Kolkata (Calcutta) and other towns in terms of per capita allocation of development fund, and (f) slum development and development of quality of life of the urban poor, reduction of infant mortality and population growth rate (For details see Bhattacharya, 2005: 82).

## **15.7 Changing Urban Employment Market and its Impact on Urbanization**

The concentration of industrial, commercial and development activities in the urban areas create employment and earning opportunities which in turn not only sustain the urban work force but also draws additional workforce from outside the urban areas, specially from the poverty infested rural areas and economically stagnant small towns. After economic liberalization the general economic trend is that while the corporate sector of industry is growing the public sector and small-scale industries are either facing stagnation or gradual decline. The fast growing high-tech corporate sector is capital intensive and therefore the employment generation capacity of this sector is limited. The public sector units have registered a negative growth of workforce in the 1990s and thereafter. The National Sample Survey (NSSO 2001) has reported a steady decline in the share of regular and salaried workers during this period. Since the large industries are now resorting to subcontracting there has been a steady growth of casual and self-employed workers and feminization of workforce. The large masses of urban workforce in these casual and contractual jobs in the tertiary sector are highly exploited and lack security of job and income. The Fourth Economic Census and Various Enterprise Surveys by NSS (see Kundu 2001) have reported the waning capacity of the urban informal sector, which was earlier termed as the “survival sector for the urban poor”, to absorb the new entrants to the urban job market. The recent changes in the urban job market have been reflected in the decline in the urban growth, particularly the falling rate of growth of large cities.

### **Reflection and Action 15.2**

Identify a business district or area in your neighbourhood. Select an industry or business organization which employed more than 100 people. Find out which background these

employees are coming from; what is their level of education and skill and what are their promotion chances.

Write a report on “Profile of Urban Workers” based on your findings. Share it with your Academic Counsellor and peers at your study centre

Another recent trend is that the large-scale industries in the private sector (national as well as multinational) are coming up mostly outside the geographical limits of the large cities because it is very difficult to find the required land within the cities. The supporters of green movement are also contributing to this process. The investors do not mind this because they get cheap land in the bargain. Thus new settlements develop around these industries without immediately adding to total urban population.

Yet another factor that has contributed to the deceleration of urban growth in the recent decades is the application of land ceiling, and control on location of industrial and commercial units, rigid land use regime imposed through Master Plans. Such restrictions have restricted the absorptive capacity of the cities.

In the post-independence India rural poverty has been more intense and widespread than the urban poverty. With the growth of population the pressure of man on land has also increased over the years. Although the ratio of non-agricultural occupation has increased the non-agricultural sector in rural economy has failed to arrest the city-bound migration of rural poor. In the recent years, however, the intensity of rural poverty is falling and the gap between urban and rural poverty is also narrowing down. Also, when the unemployment in urban areas is on the rise the rate of rural-urban migration is declining.

## 15.8 Conclusion

Urbanization does not mean the growth of urban population and concentration of production and commercial activities alone; it would also mean a balanced development of infrastructure, civic amenities and opportunities for all sections of the urbanites. It would mean access to healthy environment, egalitarian development, democratic empowerment, and decentralization of power and cultural uplift of the people. What

would ultimately matter is the quality of life that the urban centers ensure to their citizens.

Judging the current trend it is projected that by 2015 around 40 per cent of India's population would be living in urban areas and a large majority of this population would inhabit the large cities. At present nearly 38 per cent of total urban population is considered poor and about 35 per cent live in slums. About 44 per cent of urban families manage with one room, between 70 and 80 lakh urban population are homeless; 52 per cent of urban population do not have access to healthy sanitation; only about 24 per cent own sanitary latrines; a large section of urban population does not have access to safe drinking water; every year environmental pollution hands over untimely death to about 40,000 urbanites. When there is an estimated need of twenty thousand crore rupees to provide the minimum urban amenities to its people the Indian Government is down sizing the budgetary allocation for urban development. In 1951 the budgetary allocation for urban development was 8 per cent but in 2005 it has been reduced to 2.6 per cent (Bhattacharya, 2005: 56-83)

Asish Bose has observed that the post-independence urban legislations, particularly the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act of 1976, have the negative impact in the urban land and housing market because these have affected the urban poor and have not helped promote equity in the urban sector (Bose, 1995: 37). The National Commission on Urbanization submitted its report in 1988 and in the report there suggested scrapping of Urban Land Ceiling Act. The report was prepared as groundwork for the impending economic liberalization. There was a general consensus, in line with World Bank policies, that nothing should be subsidized and people must be made to pay for urban services and public utilities.

With globalization process gaining speed in India one could see its impact on the future trend of urbanization in India. The Indian cities would see a significant improvement in the infrastructure as the cities would be showcased to attract FDI, the looks of the cities would change fast and more speed would be injected in city life. The metropolitan administration and the state governments are already moving in this direction. Since the

corporate capital will not be available for development of infrastructure the State governments shall have to borrow money from the international monetary agencies for the purpose. As a part of structural adjustment the government would always want to cut expenditure on the welfare sector and public services. We have already seen how the health, transport, education, power, housing, telecommunication, television and entertainment sectors are thrown open to the private capital. The urban land would be sold to the corporate houses and as a result the urban poor and middle classes would lose their control over precious urban land. We would see demolition of slums and squatter settlements, extinction of water bodies and fallow land in and around the cities. The job market that would be created in the corporate sector would be meant for the skilled workers alone and this would not attract the rural unskilled labour force. With more and more government services going private the urban poor would find it difficult to maintain the minimum quality of life. In the era of globalization many of the public sector production units are finding it difficult to compete with the corporate capital and as a result many units are being closed down and thousands of industrial workers are being rendered jobless. The impact of these changes has already been felt in terms of slowing down of rural-urban migration and the rate of overall urban growth in the country. The falling rate of natural growth of urban population would also have its bearing on the urban growth rate in the years to come. With the urban areas already reaching the saturation point in terms of accommodation of more people, and little land being available for investment, there is a clear possibility that the cities would grow horizontally and more and more new and planned townships would come up with support of the private capital.

### **15.9 Further Reading**

Kundu, Amitabh, 2005. ‘Urbanization and Urban Governance: Search for a Perspective beyond Neo-Liberalism’, in *Pachimbange Nagar Unnyoner Abhigyata*, Proceedings of the Seminar held at NBU on 5-6 February 2005: 101-124.

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## **Unit 16**

# **Marriage, Family and Kinship**

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### **Learning Objectives**

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- Discuss the impact of urbanization and social change in India
- Describe the kinds of changes that have occurred in the institution of marriage.
- Explain the changes that have occurred in the institution of family in India and finally
- Outline the changes that have occurred in the institution of kinship in India

### **16.1 Introduction**

In this unit, as in the previous one, we are going to study the impact of the process of urbanization on social institutions like marriage family and kinship in India. The Book 1 of this course, MSOE-004: Urban Sociology has already familiarized you with the concept of urban and the process of urbanization. You learnt about the origin and development of urban sociology in the west as well as in India. It was explained to you very clearly that in India urban structures have evolved since the very ancient times from Indus valley civilization to contemporary period in India.

The forces of social change that have taken place in India, such as, the colonial impact, introduction of modern education, better means of transport and communication and so on, have had its impact on the different institutions in society. Their impact has been felt throughout India but more so on the population living in the cities than the villages. In this unit you will learn about the impact of urbanization on the social institutions of marriage, family and kinship in urban India.

## **16.2 Impact of urbanization and social change in India**

You must have studied the unit on urbanization (unit 25, MSO- 004 Sociology in India) which is part of the M.A. (sociology) core course to refresh your memory, let me explain some aspects of the process of urbanization.

Urbanization is a structural process of change which is associated with the movement or migration of people from rural to urban areas. It is generally related to industrialization but it is not always the result of industrialization. It results due to the concentration of large-scale and small-scale industrial and commercial, financial and administrative set up in the cities, technological development in transport and communication, cultural and recreational activities.

Since, the process of urbanization is in excess of the process of industrialization in India, what we often find is over urbanization. Here, a peculiar phenomenon can be observed in urban areas. There is industrial growth without a significant shift of population from agriculture to industry and of growth of urban population without a significant rise in the ratio of the urban to the total population while in terms of ratio, there may not be a great shift from rural to urban activity. But there is still a large migration of population from rural areas to urban areas. As a result we find that urban areas, towns and cities are choked and there is lack of adequate infrastructure and amenities to cope up with this large influx of population in most cities in India.

As mentioned in unit 25 Urbanization, urbanization implies a cultural and social psychological process whereby people acquire material and non-material culture, including behavioral patterns, forms of organization, and ideas that originated in, or are distinctive of the city. Although the flow of cultural influences is in both directions, i.e. from rural to urban and urban to rural, but there is no doubt that the cultural influences created by the city on non urban people are probably more pervasive than the influences exerted by the rural. The India of urbanization may be better understood when interpreted as aspects of diffusion and acculturation. Urbanization may be manifest either as intra- society or inter-society diffusion, i.e. urban culture may spread to various parts of same society or it may have cross-cultural or national boundaries and spread to other societies. It involves both borrowing and lending. On the other side of the diffusion coin is acculturation, the process where by individuals acquire the material possessions, behavioral patterns, social organizations bodies of knowledge, and

meanings of groups where culture differs in certain respects from their own. Urbanization as seen in this light is a complex process (Gist and Favia: 1933).

It is, thus clear that urbanization process is an important force of social change. In India this process besides reflecting economic growth, political change, change in values and attitudes, has also revealed elements of continuity between rural and urban social structures. Pocock (1960) categorically maintains that villages and cities in India are part of the same civilization and as such cannot be separately understood. Therefore any discussion of urban social structure in India is in terms of its basic social institutions, such as the family, marriage, kinship and caste. All these four aspects are closely related with each other in both rural, as well as, urban social structure.

It is often assumed by sociologists studying the urban society in India that the process of urbanization leads to the break down of the joint family, increase of nuclear family, slackens the caste and kinship ties and role of religion. These assumptions have been critiqued by several sociologists who tried to understand the urban social structure in India.

Gandhi, Raj (1983: 5) believes that ‘any discussion on problems of change in connection with urban sociology in India, ought not to make one feel that the sociologist of urban India should necessarily be the sociologist of social change. It merely reminds us of two facts:

1. Urbanism is often thought of as a force of social change, particularly when we are dealing with the developing society such as India, hence acquaintance with the problems of social change could be rewarding.
2. Often comparisons and contrasts are drawn between several aspects of rural and urban structure of India. The latter is, at times, interpreted as different from the former without any commentary on the problems of change. In this sense also, theoretical understanding of the problems of change could be fruitful.

Thus it is important that any discussion on the social institutions of marriage, family and kinship in urban India is understood within the theoretical framework of wider social change both from within, as well, as without, taking place in society in India.

### **16.3 Continuity and Change: The Institution of Marriage**

Social institutions have been defined as the network of social relationships in society which are relatively permanent, Weber (cf. Martindale, 1962: 55- 8) has defined social institution as the social relations in a whole network of social actions. The institutions exists only so far as people act in certain ways. It is manifest only as a pattern of behavior. Thus social institutions in the Indian cities as marriage, kinship, family, caste and religion could be conceptualized as the occurrences of complex sets of social interactions. Gandhi (1983: 20) believes that in the traditional city of India ,the institutional complex of the marriage, kinship, family, caste is most strategic for analysis and understanding of the socio cultural life of the city. He says that due to the relative preoccupation of Indian sociologists with the study of India's villages marriage within urban contact has received scant attention. Marriage as an institution has traditionally been embedded and linked with the institution of caste in India in both rural and urban areas. Marriages have been contracted keeping the caste or jati endogamy in mind Rules of marriage in each caste community in different religions of India follow different rules and regulations. Giri Raj Gupta (1974) examines a number of social dimensions of marriage, such as marriage rituals in the context of intra- family roles and norms implications of caste per for marriage and the family, social exchange among the castes, the ‘nata’ alliance (remarriage) etc. He examines them in a Rajasthan village.

In the urban cities, the phenomenon of inter caste marriages, inter-communal, inter regional, and inter- religious marriages even though infrequent, must be studied in details with the help of such methods as extensive depth interviews, caste histories and the social geographies of individuals involved. (Gandhi R. 1983: 21) “just twenty five years ago the instances of inter-caste marriage were very few, and those individuals who dared to marry out side the caste had to undergo truly great hardships. Today the situation is altogether different not only has the privileges of inter-caste marriage become considerable, but even the difficulties the inter-caste marriage couple have to face, have become comparatively quite mild “ (Kannan, C.T : 1974)

C. T. Kannan’s study of inter-caste and intercommunity marriages in Bombay is based on two hundred inter-caste marriages and fifty inter-community marriages in Bombay during 1958-59. The analysis of the couples by the year in which they got married shows a steady increase in the incidence, a majority of 64% being married after 1950. Kannan says that the spread of higher education both among the males and females is one of the reasons for the increase in

the incidence of inter-caste and inter-religious marriages amongst the younger generations in the cities. Indeed, one could safely assert that the graph of inter-caste marriages is steadily rising, never becoming a plateau, much less declining. Even in the newspaper columns, the pros and cons of inter-caste marriage are found freely debated particularly by ladies, a subject which was formerly almost a taboo. (Kannan, C. T. 1974).

Due to modern education full of western thoughts and ideas, emancipation of women and the association of young men and women with various political and social organizations, new ideas which are incompatible with the traditional norms and values are nurtured amongst the youth in cities. As a result their attitudes towards traditional norms changes and new values develop which affects marriage, kinship and family.

Kannan in his study mentioned earlier found that besides schools and colleges, social organizations such as Jati Seva Dal, Lok Sena, Swastik League, Kshariakya Parisad, etc., have played a great role in influencing the younger generations in selection of their partners. Political organizations have also been responsible in providing suitable claim for some males and females to come together and develop intimacies.

Most significant aspect of change that the noticed was that the young generation becomes individualistic by such influences and they take their own decision even in the matter of marriage. They become less caste-conscious than their elders and, therefore, in their inter group relations they ignore caste and creed differences. In many cases the objections to such inter-caste marriage by the parents was there but not always due to caste considerations. It is observed that far more important considerations existed behind parental opposition than caste of their child's bride/ groom. These were mainly the lack of wealth and status in the partner. Where these factors were favourable, the parents had given their consent and cooperation to marriage, ignoring caste differences. Thus, education and socio economic background matters more in cities than caste (Kannan, C. T 1974: 341).

In a study by B. V. Shah (1964: 84-86) of male students of Baroda University, it was found that a higher proportion of unbetrothed students from urban background (cities, 63 per cent; towns 14 per cent) than from rural background (18 per cent) existed. In case of selection of bride too a higher proportion from the urban background (cities 61 per cent; towns; 47 per cent) favoured at least a matriculate (i.e. high school graduate) than from the rural background

(only 13 per cent). Thus, the non-traditionality as regards bride selection is found largely in urban areas, whereas traditionality is found proportionately greater in rural areas than in urban areas.

It is also found that a ‘new concept of wifehood’ (i.e. emphasis on conjugal relationship) has emerged which is associated with urban living in the contemporary society in India. (Gandhi, Raj 1983: 21) M. S. Gore (1968: 196) in a study of a community near Delhi found that the urban educated respondents who had changed their occupation felt ‘closer to their wife’ than their mother. Thus, it is found that in urban society the joint family living in India which traditionally deemphasizes the direct conjugal relationship between man and his wife seems to have changed as nearly three-quarters of the highly urbanized male respondents tend to favour closeness to wife.’

Gandhi, R. says that these developments as discovered by Gore and others conform to William J. Goode (1963) who hypothesized that there is a logical fit between the urban-industrial society and the ‘conjugal family’ which is supposed to be the characteristic of the west. Conkhin’s study (1973) of the emerging conjugal role patterns in the city of Dharwar in South India notes that urbanization and education does result in a significant increase in conjugal role patterns, even within a joint household.

However, while some sociologists may jump to the conclusion that urbanization and education will lead to ‘conjugal family patterns’ in India even before industrialization; it is a matter of doubt whether the ‘conjugal family pattern’ and joint family pattern did not co-exist in urban India since early times (c.f. A M Shah, 1974). The distinction between the two is a false dichotomy of western sociology unnecessarily imposed upon the understanding of Indian urban society.

Another change observed by sociologists of urban areas is that age at marriage has increased. But the question of self choice or ‘arranged marriage’ still remains a debatable point. Cormack’s claim (1961: 101) that the Indian youth are increasingly allowed the ‘right’ of decision for their marriage without the ‘means’ to make it. Therefore, it is quite clear from the available evidence that situation in urban India is not automatically conducive to increase in the freedom of choice for one’s marriage since marriage is still closely tied to family (and hence to parental authority and kin-constraint) and caste (Gandhi, R. 1983).

Aileen Ross (1961: 253) in her study of the Hindu families in the city of Bangalore found that young people tend to select their spouse themselves and then take the approval from their parents. But Vatuk (1972:73-111) is opposed to this view. She studied two middle class neighborhoods in the North Indian city of Meerut. She found only four cases of so-called “love marriages” (i.e. marriages of personal choice) during her field-work among the mohalla residents. These occurred within the circle of relatives and friends, involving either fellow students in a co-educational college, fellow workers in an office, affinal kins or residents of the same dwelling. During her study she did not find even a single case of arranged inter-caste marriage.

Men in these middle class mohallas accepted their inability to arrange inter-caste marriages for their children, however, egalitarian they may be. Karve (1965) like Srinivas (1969) and Khare (1970) observed that the role of dowry in marriage arrangements was of significance. She found a tendency to give larger amounts of cash rather than goods amongst the wealthy Banias. Gandhi (1983) believes that what urbanism does is to increase the ‘price’ of the college educated urban youth of India in the matrimonial market.

The significance of caste endogamy too remains largely unchanged as ‘arranged marriages’ are contracted traditionally within one’s own caste. Kapadia’s study (1968; 119) of family in urban India found that 51 per cent out of 513 university graduates interviewed expressed their willingness to give their children in marriage outside their own caste but only one of them were against the departure from tradition. This change of attitude is reflected in opinion rather than actual practice. Caste considerations are still playing a major role in marriage in reality.

In a study conducted by Raj Gandhi (1976) of the Bania Sub-caste in the city of Jamnagar found that 67.5 per cent of the kin of the respondents were found to be married into their own Dasa Bania sub-caste. Of the remaining 32.5 per cent, 13.3 per cent had married into a higher Visa sub-caste; the practice of hypergamy, which does not necessarily reflect the breach of caste endogamy. He found only 14 cases (11.6 per cent) of real inter-caste marriages going beyond the sub-caste and caste boundaries. Mandelbaum (1970: 653) gives a general statement which according to Gandhi sums up the developments that have occurred and the continuities that exist in the arena of marriage as a social institution. He says that ‘although endogamy remains a major consideration in arranging a marriage, the boundaries of the endogamous group... are typically being enlarged, and marriage patterns may now come from

formerly separate jatis (sub-castes) of the same jati cluster... but such unions are still very exceptional even among the urban educated people.'

Since, the studies on marriage in urban areas are few and far between, it is difficult to generalise. But what stands out clearly is the continuing link it has with caste. There has been increase in factors like, age at marriage, wider circle of spouse selection within the caste, level of education of bride and so on. Let us now understand the social institution of family in the urban context.

#### **16.4 Continuity and Change: The Institution of Family**

Family in India has been generally of two kinds, joint or extended family comprising more than two generations of members such as a married couple, their children, married or unmarried and one or both parents. The other type of family is the nuclear family consisting of husband, wife and unmarried children.

It was initially assumed that the process of urbanization leads to a decline in family size, weakening of family ties and break up of joint family system into nuclear families. This assumption was a result of application of Western notions of evolution. F. Tonnies, E. Durkheim, Louis Wirth etc., advanced theories which explained these developments in society as it moved from simple to complex. Industrialization and urbanization brought about these types of social changes in society and nuclear families came to be associated with the modern industrial urban societies. In India, too, this assumption presupposes that joint family is an institution of the rural social structure and as society gets urbanized the joint families, associated with rural agrarian economy will give way to nuclear family with the increase of non-agrarian occupations.

But as evidence gathered by sociologists studying family in urban India reveals, this hypothesis does not hold much credence since as a matter of fact joint families are found in urban areas as well. The correlation of "joint" family with rural areas and "nuclear family with urban" is not tenable. In fact, sociologists like A.M. Shah (1970) Kapadia (1956) Gore (1968) and others observe a cyclical change from nuclear to joint to nuclear family within a period of time. This is the household dimension of family in India which indicates that there is no correlation between urbanization and 'separate' nuclear households.

A. M. Shah (1970: 100-101) dispels the myth of the breakdown of the joint family in urban India. He studied the social history of Gujarat and on the basis of his findings, he claims that in the past the sanskritized castes (i.e. those castes which have adopted the values, customs and behaviour of the upper castes) formed a much higher proportion of the population in towns (or cities) than in villages. This implies that the principle of the residential unity of partikin and their wives was practiced to a much greater extent in towns than in villages. This shows that towns included a considerable number of households composed of two or more married brothers living together after their parent's death. It may also have included a few large households where married cousins lived together in the same household even after the death of their father and grandfather; the households composed of parents and two or more married sons formed a greater proportion of household in the town.

Shah believes that these findings are very important because they debunk the two notions that are widely prevalent amongst urban sociologists in India. These notions are: (1) that the people who migrate from villages are governed by strong emphasis on the principle of the residential unity of patrikins and their wives; and (2) that the urban area into which they come to live is necessarily an area having a weak emphasis on the principle of the residential unity of patrikin and their wives.'

I. P. Desia (1964: 117-8) in his study of Mahuva considers 'jointness' of Indian family when seen in the light of the actions of members guided by the traditional norms, and then examines the effects of urbanization on 'jointness'. He operationalizes urbanization in terms of the 'duration of stay in Mahuva'. During his study he found that the older families tend to be more joint than the younger ones and where the nuclear families preponderate over the older families, nuclearity may also preponderate over the joint families. He found that the families under investigation were more joint than nuclear in terms of ownership of property and mutual obligations. In case of residentiality too, he found enough evidence that nuclear families continue to grow joint and joint becomes nuclear.

In this sense, his findings conform with A. M. Shah's suggestion that one of the most fruitful approaches in this case would be to examine the developmental process of (family) households, both progressive and regressive which is assumed to be operative in the villages, towns, and we believe, the cities of India (Gandhi; R 1983:33).

Ram Krishna Mukherjee (1964:87) studied the rural-urban differences in the familial organization of West Bengal society. He too, while examining the co-resident and commensal relationships amongst kin groups as the locally functioning family units found the presence of extended or non-nuclear family types amongst the cities, towns and villages equally. But as he mentions, paradoxically, the nuclear type of family is found most frequently in villages, then in the towns, and the least frequently in cities.

In a different study, Mukherjee (1965) reports that unlike the common assumption, his data does not support the belief that joint family organization is not linked with the urban way of life. His study indicates clearly that joint family organization increases progressively as one shifts from villages to small towns to large cities or from non-industrial through partly industrial to highly industrial towns. He discovered that the upper castes, who also generally belong to the upper economic classes gave more importance to the joint family organization than the lower castes and lower economic classes. Mukherjee's findings support Shah's (1974: 246) correlation between household, caste and rural-urban community.

Similarly, M. S. Gore (1968) came to a similar conclusion while testing a similar kind of hypothesis in three communities which is supposed to be represented by three stages of urbanization, viz. the city of Delhi, villages on the fringe of Delhi, and the villages away from Delhi. In spite of the fact that he confined his empirical study (using questionnaire interview method) to only the merchant caste of Aggarwals, he took almost equal number of families from rural and urban communities, almost equally divided between 'nuclear' and 'joint' families in each type of community. According to Gore, there is a distinction between the processes of industrialization and urbanization. He uses the latter i.e. urbanization to refer to the increasing ratio of urban dwelling to the non-urban dwelling persons in a county. He further states that the family change may be induced by such factors as higher education, modern professions and bureaucratic populations (considering that these are the attributes of urban life). However, he found that neither of these factors, not even industrial occupations were found to have any significant change in the joint family.

Kapadia (1956) in his analysis of the National Register data on households in the towns of Navasari and the fifteen villages around Navasari in South Gujarat similarly found that the assumption that people in cities and towns live in nuclear families while joint families are stronger in the villages is incorrect contrary to this opinion, he found during his studies (1954

& 1955) of 531 high school teachers (279 Gujarati, 187 Maharashtrian and 47 Kannadiga in Bombay city, that so far as the residential family is concerned, 219 (42 per cent) out of 513 teachers lived in elementary families i.e. nuclear families, while 67 per cent (294 teachers) lived in joint families. Not only a high degree of jointness was found in the residential group, but outside the residential group (Gandhi, R 1983).

Conklin (1976) too during his study of the household composition of Karnataka State based on the Government survey result found that urbanization was not associated with a decline of complex households (joint households) nor was there any relationship between the two. Saroj Kapoor's (1965) study of family and kinship among the Khatris, a wealthy caste of businessmen in Delhi also found that at least 42.9 per cent of complex households existed in a neighbourhood in the metropolitan city of Delhi.

We find in the analysis of several studies of family and household in the urban context that not only kinship is found to be an important principle of social organization in cities but also that there is a structural congruity between the joint family on the one hand and the requirements of industrial and urban life on the other. Milton Singer's (1968) study of 19 families of outstanding business leaders in Chennai city discovered that these leaders could effectively 'compartmentalize' traditional values and life style in the area of home and modern professional outlook for the business or company at their offices. There need not be any conflict between the two. He argued that a modified version of traditional joint family is consistent with the urban industrial setting.

Sudha Kaldate ({1962}2003) however, holds a different opinion. She says that all these studies which assert that 'although structurally the traditional (joint) family appears to be breaking down, functionally it is not so. These try to maintain that the joint family is not disintegrating in order to function as independent units (nuclear) but adapting to new patterns which have the same degrees of jointness. The strong protagonists of the views are Kapadia (1954) and Desai (1956), these are not looking at the varying outside factors.'

She says that 'any social institution which is exposed to a number of varying outside factors should result in change. Urbanization, in addition to reflecting technological change, creates a new form of economic organization and gives rise to a new way of life, Cultural uniformity

and traditional patterns of belief and behaviour tend to change under the impact of the above changes and social change gets accelerated.'

Kaldate (2003:173) believes that these types of changes in social institutions do not affect the areas where a large proportion of the indigenous population is resident in a village within the urban framework. To the extent that these populations remains outside from urban contacts they tend to retain their 'folk society' characteristics (Hauser 1957). This fact is very important since it is this reason that the extent of change in the institution of family is found to exist more in the areas within the orbit of the city and less in the interior communities. We may give the example of the pockets of rural areas within and on the fringes of metropolitan city of Delhi.

Kaldate supports her hypothesis with empirical data available. Her basic thesis is that " in the process of social disorganization, the changes in family organization tend to take the form of changes from the large or joint family system to the small family system. Larger proportions of joint as well as quasi-joint families are found in the more traditional communities (existing outside the urban framework); and smaller proportions of such types of families are found in such communities as have been more exposed to outside influence.'

So far we learnt about the impact of urbanization of the social institution of family. Let us now explain briefly the institution of kinship in India.

## **16.5 Continuity and Change: The Institution of Kinship**

As you already know the social institution of marriage, family, kinship and caste are closely interrelated in Indian society.

The kinship pattern in Indian society is generally viewed in the context of Hindu joint family and therefore has not received much attention. However, like the studies of family in the urban contact, this area of kinship again suffers from the same dichotomous assertions of opposition between the rural and the urban. But ever since the 'break up' theories of joint family in urban communities has been proved incorrect a few interesting studies on urban kinship in India have reported elaborate network of kinship in Indian cities. Gandhi, R. (1983 : 25) in his study of family, kin group and sub-caste as the realms of primary interactions of the Indian urbanite found that as many as 36.7 percent of the women of the Das Bania sub-caste had their

parental or natal kin (parents, brothers, their wives, sisters, their husbands) living in the same city, similarly, the largest proportion, about 55 percent of the respondents were found to interact most frequently with their natal kin, these findings have further implications, according to Gandhi, when we compare them with Vatuk's study of the north Indian city of Meerut.

Vatuk (1972: 140-41) believed that because of the patrilateral emphasis in the north Indian kinship system, a wife is expected to interact most frequently and intensively with her affines, agnates of her husband and their wives. However, in Meerut, she found that the significant number of married women who live near their natal kin (i.e. their own parents) interact more frequently with them than with the affinal kin. It is true that under such circumstances, the bonds between the women and her natal kin could be stronger as such interactions are face to face, primary and reciprocal and they tend to maintain the continuity and solidarity with her natal kin unit.

However, Vatuk assumes that there was a strong patrilateral emphasis in Meerut prior to urbanization. Gandhi believes that traditionally the cities of India have always manifested strong ties with both the natal and the affinal kin of women as it has been possible for them to marry within the city where their parents (i.e. natal unit) lived unlike the situation in the north Indian villages where village exogamy separated the woman from her natal village after marriage.

Vatuk, however, arrives at the conclusion that so far as changes in the kinship system are concerned there is an increasing tendency toward neolocal residence in the city. However the weakness of this interpretation is that she presumes that the neolocal residence for a married couple in an Indian city is a new phenomenon. This belief coupled with the belief that earlier most residences in Meerut city were patrilocal have no supportive evidence

Unlike Vatuk, I.P Desai's study of Mahuva town effectively proves that the cyclical pattern of patrilocal-neolocal-patrilocal residence i.e. joint residence to nuclear and back again to joint residence may continue to exist in any city, village or town and there is no conclusive evidence to prove change in any one direction. This conclusion is again supported by Gandhi's study of the city in Jamnagar in western India, (Gandhi R., 1983: 27)

It is the evolutionary bias in sociology in general and urban sociology in particular that can be observed in the finding or research in kinship patterns. Chekki (1974: 156) studied two caste clusters, Brahmin(Gokul) and Lingayat (Kalyan) from the suburbs of Dharwar city, Karnataka. He discovered that in order to meet the demands of complex modern urban life a modified extended family is emerging and it consists of a series of nuclear families joined together on an equalitarian basis for mutual aid and functioning to facilitate the mobility strivings of its component member families and individuals.

Mary Chatterjee (1947: 337-49) in her study of kinship in sweeper(low caste) locality in Banaras city found that the kinship terms were also used not only for persons in the mohalla, whether or not related, but also for most of the persons encountered outside the locality. She found that kinship was the basic principle in structuring of that urban locality, both as a means of conceptualization of relations and as a principle of recruitment to residence. The consanguineal (i.e. blood relatives) and affinals (relatives by marriage) were linked in terms of their relation to the acquisition of cleaning jobs in the municipality.

Gandhi (1983) observes that largely the kinship studies in urban areas go to prove the contention of Pocock (1960) who believed that the presumed dichotomy between ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ does not obtain in the Indian situation, at least when we examine such social institutions as family and kinship in urban India.

He says that when we think in terms of change in the patterns of kinship in urban India’ we observe a strange anomaly between continuity and change. However, increase in neolocal residences, change in the outward forms or observable patterns of kinship, may be change in degree and not in kind. Although urban-rural differences were not found to be statistically significant, the study (Conklin’s and other) maintains that urbanization levels and employment of wife of the household outside are major factors in the relative freedom of women.

## **16.6 Conclusion**

when we study the impact of urbanization on the social institutions of marriage, family and kinship, we find that the evolutionary approach of western scholars, from Durkheim, F. Tonnies (1940) Louis Wirth (1938) have markedly influenced the studies of urban sociologists. Such theoretical assumptions led to the biased approach of dichotomizing the

rural and urban as two different types of societies. Initially several sociologists jumped to the conclusion that the joint family is associated with the rural agrarian economy, as found in the west and the nuclear family belonged to the urban industrialized non-agrarian economies.

However, several studies on family, marriage, kinship and caste in urban India, e.g. I.P Desai's(1964), K.M. Kapadia (1956). Ramkrishana Mukherjee and so on found contrary to this view there was no such link between the types of society and jointness or nuclearity of the family and the household. In fact A.M. Shah's study gives a turning point to these studies by pointing out that there is a cyclical change of joint to nuclear to joint in urban areas as well. However, it is quite clear from the analysis of all these studies that slight modifications in terms of personal and private lives and professional competitive life in the cities and towns; as pointed out by Milton Singer (1968) does exist.

Another important fact is that ample confusion in terms of defining and understanding of what constitutes "joint" and "nuclear" exists. This area of study therefore needs greater attention since as mentioned in the sections of the unit, all the social institutions marriage, family and kinship are constantly adjusting and accommodating to new needs and requirements and therefore subtle changes keep taking place without affecting the larger form.

## **16.7 Further Reading**

Gandhi, Raj 1983 in Main Currents in Indian Sociology, ed. By Giri Raj Gupta, vol. VI Urban India, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd: New Delhi.

Sandhu, R.S (ed.) 2003, Urbanization in India Sociological Contributions, Sage Publications: New Delhi.



# **Unit 17**

## **Traditional Neighbourhoods and Modern Cities**

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- 17.1 Introduction
- 17.2 Concept of Neighbourhood
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- 17.5 Neighbourhoods in modern cities: Suburbs, Ethnoburbs
- 17.6 Criticism
- 17.7 Conclusion
- 17.8 Further Reading

### **Learning Objectives**

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- explain the concept of neighbourhood
- assess the importance of neighbourhoods in modern cities
- explain more recent concepts like ethnoburb

### **17.1 Introduction**

From its inception Sociology gave importance to the analysis of social relationships. With this tie between individual and family and between various families got prominence in Sociological literature. Scholars focusing on importance of groups in an individual's life also recognized the importance of neighbours. Neighbourhood is a community of families living in close proximity over a period of time and therefore influencing each other's life. In villages and small towns neighbourhoods provided a canvass of social

networks defining society at large. In large industrial cities neighbourhoods were seen as the microcosm of the larger world.

Today the social life of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is highly diversified. Do the metropolitan cities, global cities and world cities have any space for community ties and neighbourhoods? If yes, what kind of neighbourhoods would there be?

The title of this unit is ‘traditional neighbourhoods, modern cities’. From modernist viewpoint, it was thought that with modernization, traditional neighbourhoods would be an anomaly. This unit tries to address some of the above mentioned issues in short. In a world defined by capital flows, information flows and cultural flows, how do individuals sustain socially? What are the defining principles of their community life? The time-space compression and immense mobility characterizes today’s world cities and global cities. Then what is the nature of social networks?

## **17.2 Concept of Neighbourhood**

The Advanced Learner’s Oxford Dictionary (1974, 1982) defines neighbourhood as ‘people living in a district; area near the place’. According to Compact Oxford Dictionary and thesaurus, ‘neighbourhood is a district within a town or city.’ In Sociological literature, neighbourhood is ‘a term used to describe localities in urban areas which are characterized by a common sense of identity and usually a common life style. (Lawson and Garrod: 2003, 178)

One of the very influential and popular schools of thought in urban sociology was the Ecological or Chicago school in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Scholars like Park and Burgess, with the ecological orientation differentiated between localities within a city. Different kinds of land use, and the varied urban populations that occupied the city were

classified into separate areas. These “neighborhoods” (Park 1915,580) or “natural areas” (Park [1929] 1952,196) had particular affinities or aversions to one another, resulting overall in an urban ecology- a spatial division of the city, that corresponds to the functional division of labor occurring within it. The examples of these areas were the central business district, exclusive residential areas, areas of heavy or light industry, slums, ghettos, immigrant communities, bohemians and “hobohemias” (Flanagan, 1999: 54).

Community studies, a sub-discipline of Sociology covered for a long time, empirical study of territorially defined communities like villages and urban neighbourhoods. According to Tuan Yi-Fu (1974), “‘Neighborhood’ and ‘Community’ denote concepts popular with planners and social workers. They provide a framework for organizing the complex human ecology of a city into manageable sub-areas; they are also social ideals feeding on the belief that the health of society depends on the frequency of neighbourly acts and the sense of communal membership.”

Charles Cooley, in his writings on ‘Primary group’ and ‘Secondary group’ where he discusses the development of the ‘Looking- glass self’ highlights the significance of the role played by neighbours in shaping the personality of individuals. Parents, neighbours and schoolmates are the three examples of primary groups that he offers. These according to him cast lasting influence on an individual due to their long term, close, direct, involuntary relationships characteristic of these groups.

The term ‘traditional neighbourhood’ denotes localities with ethnic enclaves or settlements of families with identical values, ideals and lifestyles. These are the places where relationships between neighbours are close, direct and intimate as opposed to the

idea of cosmopolitan heterogeneous urban settlements. The spatial features of these localities are imprinted with traditional architectural forms and practices.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the term neighbourhood suggested settlements of either the working classes or the bourgeoisie with similar occupational, economic and cultural background in major Western industrial towns.

### **Reflection and Action 17.1**

Observe the neighbourhood within which you are living. Do you think your neighbourhood is traditional or modern? Write down why it is traditional or modern keeping in mind the above description in about two pages.

Discuss your essay with other students at your study centre.

## **17.3 Neighbourhood Studies**

As Wellman and Leighton (1979:363) have pertinently argued, ‘Urban Sociology has tended to be neighbourhood sociology.’ What they meant by this was the collapse of urban sociology into study of small networks, direct social interaction and small scale studies of how sense of community evolves.

In social geography ‘neighbourhood studies’ signified an important branch, wherein study of specific localities with shared architectural forms and shared socio-economic and cultural features was undertaken. It was observed by these studies that certain neighbourhoods showed certain housing patterns and certain lifestyles. These studies were significant in the context of two factors: in the emerging Western industrial metropolitan cities, social commentators and Sociologists with functionalist orientation had predicted a loss of shared values. Secondly, neighbourhood studies falsified the

assumption that in modern cities ethnicity would lose its importance, as most of the neighbourhoods were based on race and ethnicity.

In the field of Urban Sociology, scholars belonging to the Chicago School took up neighbourhood studies. Looking at processes of adaptation and competition, they focused on creation of separate neighbourhoods on class lines. Some focused on ethnic ghettos and enclaves. These places were preferred destination of first generation immigrants. Ethnic links made occupational and social adjustments easier. For this purpose they undertook detailed observations for months together to create classic neighbourhood profiles. Participant observation, life history and survey were the preferred techniques. (Spates and Macionis, 1982:46,47)

Park, Burgess, and their followers contributed to the theoretical and methodological aspects of the new field called urban sociology. America witnessed emergence and expansion of many large cities in the beginning of the 20th century, and therefore, manifold study of the urban subject matter was a need of the hour. Also, it was believed that the American way of life was based on industrialization; human spirit of achievement and this modern urban world was expected to create new identity of ‘modern human being’. In reality, however, ethnic enclaves emerged in all big cities of the world and social networks played a very important role alongside wealth and power. Burgess, in the analysis of his famous ‘concentric zone theory’, pointed this out. (Burgess, 1967: 50) The famous diagram illustrating the land use and distribution of population in Chicago city argued that manufacturing activities determined the nature of city life in America in the early 20th century. As the city grows it gets divided into sub-communities, which are spatially segregated into zones or sectors.

Wellman and Leighton (1979:363-90) discuss the reasons why neighbourhood studies substituted community studies. First, the neighbourhood provided itself as an easily accessible research site to urbanists. Secondly, neighbourhood was the building block of the city, which was the aggregate of many such neighbourhoods as per the ecological school. Third, administrative officials imposed their own definitions of neighbourhood boundaries while attempting to create bureaucratic units. Fourth, urban sociology's particular concern with spatial distributions had tended to be translated into local area concern. Fifth, many analysts have been concerned with the conditions under which solidary sentiments can be maintained. These scholars acknowledge the fact the genre of 'neighbourhood studies has produced hundreds of finely wrought depictions of urban life and they have given us powerful ideas about how small scale social systems operate in a variety of social contexts'.

Rex and Moore as Saunders (1981) observes it, took works of the ecological schools as the starting point of their theory. They argued that in the initial settlement of the city, three different groups, differentially placed with regard to the possession of property, become segregated from one another and work out their own community style of life' (1967, p.8). The upper middle class owning relatively large houses are located near the business and cultural centers, but away from the industries. The working class rents small terraced cottages are bonded by economic adversity with others in the same situation experience a strong sense of collective identity and mutual support. The lower middle class rent their houses but aspires the bourgeois way of life. These three groups signify not only three kinds of neighbourhoods, but also three different lifestyles and value

structures. Their occupational positions, access to property ownership and resultant consumption and cultural preferences are significantly different.

Rex and Moore, while forwarding their theory of space, focus on conflicts over housing. They point out that the direction of migration is from inner city area to outer limits of the city. Basing their analysis on the study of Sparkbrook in Birmingham they illustrate that working class neighbourhoods decline into ‘twilight areas’ with a concentration of the immigrant population. This happens alongside a parallel development: increasing desirability of suburban middle class housing for the lower middle class. As a result of this suburban spacious housing becomes a scarce commodity.

Community Studies is an academic area, which has concentrated on study of neighbourhoods. In most of the Western metropolitan cities neighbourhoods are organized around ethnicity. Hence community studies are conducted in neighbourhoods. Another sub-discipline, which focuses on neighbourhoods and their particularities, is Ethnic and minority studies.

Distinctive neighborhoods have well-defined boundaries that in a way isolate them from rest of the city. Especially suburbs with peculiar characteristics like luxurious housing and deteriorating slums; settlements of immigrants and ethnic ghettos get distinguished from other localities for a variety of economic and cultural reasons.

However, many scholars have questioned whether neighbourhood refers to a mental perception or a planning category? Suzanne Keller has shown that the concept of neighborhood is not at all simple. The administrator or planner may define it in terms of physical characteristics. But the resident’s perception of the locality might be completely different.

As Tuan Yi-Fu (1974), puts it, the words “neighborhood” and “district” tend to evoke in the outsider’s mind images of simple geometrical shape, when in fact the channels of neighborly acts that define neighbourhood may be extremely intricate and vary from small group to small group living in close proximity. Moreover, the perceived extent of neighbourhood does not necessarily correspond with the web of intense neighbourly contacts.

The degree to which acknowledgement and assessment of a neighbourhood’s specificities depends on class of residents according to Tuan. It is observed that the extremely rich are more conscious of the boundaries of their physical territory as well as their cultural world. They devise ways to keep others away from their realm. Tuan states that ‘Middle class suburbanites can be even more sensitive of their territorial integrity, for their world, in comparison with that of the established rich, is more vulnerable to the invasion by “uppity” outsiders’ (Tuan: 1974, 75). He also observes that white immigrants from ethnic specific residential quarters are not as conscious of their territoriality and cultural identity as their coloured counterparts from slums for coloured population. This may be due to the fact the coloured population face hostility everywhere except in their locality.

Following the illustrious contributions of the theorists of Chicago schools with their detailed accounts of occupational and residential differentiation, neighbourhoods in Chicago were studied repeatedly by various scholars. Gerald Suttles (1968) in his study of a poor neighbourhood in Chicago, with various ethnic communities showed that there was a well-worked out social order based upon strong territorial identification. In a locality that Suttles called the “Addams Area,” growing numbers of blacks, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans slowly replaced Italians. Although each community had its

independent existence and ties, all ethnic groups shared territorial identification. In spite of tensions between ethnic communities, conflict and confrontation was avoided. Sometimes tensions between adolescents led to confrontations between Italians within and outside the neighbourhood. At such moments going beyond ethnic divisions, the entire neighbourhood got united against outsiders. Suttles (1972, 21-35) termed this as “defended neighborhood”.

Both Tuan (1974) and refer to Beacon Hill, Boston as a neighbourhood of those with exclusive access to peculiar kinds of residence, lifestyle and therefore a territorial boundary. While commenting on symbolism, imagery and perception of American cities, Tuan observes that Beacon Hill, Boston marked itself off from others by tradition, culture, social standing and economic power. He argues that though Beacon Hill matches ethnic quarters of some kinds, it is different in so far as it maintains its isolation through its presumed sense of superiority. Ethnic quarters, on the other hand take isolation to be the best means to cope up with threat. Beacon Hill began after the revolution as upper class suburbia. It was planned as a fashionable quarter for those with position and means. He compares Beacon hill with West End- another working class locality which sprang near Beacon Hill. The residents of the later neighbourhood were not aware of the territorial identity as those in Beacon Hill were. (Tuan:76)

## **17.4 Neighbourhoods: Traditional and Modern**

Traditional neighbourhoods denote old parts of the city. In many American studies, these parts are referred to as ‘inner city areas.’ Immigrant population with low quality of amenities and dilapidated or deteriorating housing conditions, no governmental

investment, marks these localities. As the city grows the lower middle classes move out of the inner city areas and the new immigrants move in these dwellings with low rent. Architecturally, inner city areas show traditional styles and forms of using space. They facilitate older styles of interactions and social networks.

Middle classes and the rich population on the other hand inhabit outer city areas. These localities have more amenities, large plots of land, more services and are scarcely populated. These are more modern neighbourhoods with up-market styles and forms of spatial use. In some cities the traditional neighbourhoods have been preserved as architectural heritage sites. (In Sydney, for example, the old quarters have been turned into a tourist spectacle.)

As Sharon Zukin and others have pointed out cities in the post-modern era symbolize cultural spectacles. Discussing the case of Disneyland, she points out that parts of cities are now created, maintained and marketed as items of consumption. Cities showcase dazzling, grand architectural and material worlds, where viewers can interpret and reinterpret spatial reality in multiple ways. Cultural homogenization results from the standardizing impact of globalization imposing universal food, beverage and clothing styles.

In the global South, it is difficult to differentiate between traditional and modern neighbourhoods in the same way as in the U.S. of the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In Mumbai, for example, the older neighbourhoods with textile mills and lower class residences are recently converted into up-market malls and shopping areas. Here, the old defunct mill chimney exists along with plush multi-storied multiplex or mall. In many

south Asian cities, the inequalities between access to resources and livelihoods result in the simultaneous existence of polar worlds.

### **Reflection and Action 17.2**

On a weekend or holiday, take a trip to the surrounding colonies in your city town. (If you stay in a village then you may choose the nearby town). Find out the socio-economic status, occupation of the residents and infrastructural facilities available in at least three neighbourhoods. Are there people of different ethnic backgrounds living in the same colony, are rich luxury houses and small middle class residences found in same colony, etc.

Write a two page note on “My city /Town” based on the above findings. Share your report with other students at your Study Centre.

## **17.5 Neighbourhoods in Recent Times: Suburbs, Ethnoburbs, and so on**

In recent years works dealing with space, economy and culture have pointed out how ‘place internalised the market’ (Zukin: 1993) On the other hand, scholars like Sassen (2001) have theorized the ways in which the global economy is now controlled from a few cities, wherein financial services and speculative decisions are made. Though manufacturing is decentred through various continents, certain cities have emerged as ‘global cities’- global nodes of economic and technological flows. These writings have shown that local neighbourhoods are today influenced by transnational capital, technological and cultural flows (Zukin: 1993, Sassen: 1991, 2001). This means that study of urban phenomenon in terms of local community structures, territorially defined value systems would be irrelevant in the context of outsourcing and offshore production.

Anthony King (2005) has reiterated this in his recent book. He reminds us that suburbs meant an outgrowth of the city. “Today, however, in many cities round the world, there are not just sub-urbs but also supraurbs (suprurbs) or, alternatively, globurbs. By this we mean forms and settlements on the outskirts of the city, the origins of which – economic, social, cultural, architectural – are generated less by developments inside the city, or even inside the country, and more by external forces beyond its boundaries. The influences as well as the capital come from afar, either electronically, or physically, and not least through printed media.” (2005,97) he argues that today’s new kinds of suburbs sustain from outside state boundaries. Not just global forces generate these suburbs. Extending the concept of postcolonial globalization used by Hopkins (2002), he states, they are generated ‘more particularly, by those of imperialism, colonialism, nationalism, as well as the diasporic migratory cultures and capital flows of global capitalism- these are the postcolonial globurbs.’ (King: 2005, 97-103)

King sites the concept of ‘ethnoburb’ coined by geographer Wei Li. It means ‘suburban ethnic clusters of residential areas and business districts in large American metropolitan areas. They are multi-ethnic communities in which one ethnic minority group has a significant concentration but does not necessarily comprise a majority (Li Wei 1998: 479). This term was referred to describe San Gabriel Valley, in the eastern suburban area of Los Angeles County with more than 158,000 ethnic Chinese (from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and elsewhere), in 1990. This was the largest suburban Chinese concentration in the US. The ethnoburb, is ‘a new outpost in the global economy’, which emerges as an outcome of the ‘influence of international geopolitical and global

economic restructuring'. Changing national immigration and trade policies, local demographics, economic and political contexts also result in the making of an ethnoburb. He also discusses another category called Technoburbs (King: 2005, 106). Reflecting on the role of technologies in creating and maintaining suburbs, King refers to Silverstone and Robert Fishman (1987). Fishman comments on the 'new high technological post-suburbs growing along the edge of the old' and underscores "the home-centered nature of both physical and symbolic environments, as 'technoburb' and television promote their mutual interests, in their dependence on, and encouragement of decentralization (Silverstone 1997: 9)". It is through television that the ethnoburb is instantaneously linked with the 'countries of home', "the 'imagined communities' of ethnic recognition round the world"(King, 2005, 107). It acts as engines of suburban hybridization, reproducing in the process the 'ambiguities of modernity' (Silverstone 1997).

#### **Box 17.1      The Non Resident Indians**

It is observed that Indians in USA or UK tend to have close interaction with other Indians and Asians living there. They tend to celebrate their festivals; life cycle rituals, etc., within this close community. Most parents with grown up children prefer to arrange marriages of their children within their caste/ region and there fore often come to India for this purpose.

King's discussion of these contemporary processes shaping hybridities, bring to the fore transnational migrations, diasporic communities and decentralised production coupled with distantiated subjectivities.

## 17.6 Criticisms

As the discussion in the previous section illustrates, the phrase based on binary opposites of ‘traditional neighbourhoods in modern cities’ is not exactly relevant to describe or analyze contemporary urban phenomenon.

Earlier on in late 1970s itself, the tendency to associate urban neighbourhoods with communities was criticized. Wellman and Leighton (1979) have commented on the problems created by the entangling of study of community ties with neighbourhood in the following way:

1. The identification of a neighbourhood as a container of community ties assumes the a priori organizing power of space. This is spatial determinism.
2. The presence of many local relationships does not necessarily create discrete neighbourhoods.
3. The identification of neighbourhood studies with community studies may omit major spheres of interaction.
4. The focus on neighbourhoods may give undue importance to spatial characteristics as causal variables.
5. Many analyses have been over occupied with the condition under which solidary sentiments can be maintained. When not found in the neighbourhood, community is assumed not to exist.

These criticisms also hold true for the most part for the tendency to view traditional neighbourhoods in modern cities as repositories of ‘close, direct relations, the souls of the soul less cities’. Today residents of a neighbourhood might not attach territorial markers of identity as closely as they would attach other kinds of markers, for example, certain

kinds of music, participation in particular kinds of activities, etc. Moreover, there would be simultaneous emergence of multiple identities or switching from one marker to another. The geographical unit of space is not the solitary determinant of identity, lifestyle and ties.

## 17.7 Conclusions

As mentioned above, today it is hard to find ‘traditional’ neighbourhoods in terms of architectural form and style except a few heritage sites or preserved neighbourhoods. The crucial question that students of urban sociology need to ask is whether a dichotomous pairing of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ can prove to be a viable analytical tool in the first place. Tradition is always a relative category – in terms of time and space. Modernity is also relative to time and space and is defined dynamically. The title ‘traditional neighbourhoods in modern cities’ poses a number of epistemological and methodological questions.

Without going into the details of the discussion of these aspects, we can certainly conclude that in contemporary metropolitan and non-metropolitan cities throughout the world intimate ties between neighbours are observed. But this does not mean that all neighbours share direct, intimate relations; neither does this suggest that intimate relationships can be sustained by territorial boundaries alone.

At the same time, there is enough evidence to suggest that neighbourhoods are not only geographical or administrative units imposed on maps; but many of them represent certain value structures, class-specific lifestyles and consumption preferences. In the developing world, these peculiarities are even more complicated by internal hierarchies of class, caste, race and gender.

In the first half of this century ecological school theorists believed in homogeneous structuring of neighbourhoods. Today, it will be adventurous to state so.

## **17.8 Further Reading**

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# **Unit 18**

## **Urban Influences on Rural Areas**

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- 18.1 Introduction
- 18.2 Some Major Studies
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- 18.4 Influences of Urban Areas
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- 18.7 Social Influences
- 18.8 Cultural Influences
- 18.9 Conclusion
- 18.10 Further Reading

### **Learning Objectives**

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- briefly describe some major studies on the urban influences on rural areas;
- the three situations of urban impact;
- discuss some of the influences of urban areas;
- explain the economic influences of urban areas on rural areas;
- describe the occupational changes that take place in rural areas; and
- outline the political, social and cultural influences of the urban areas on rural areas.

### **18.1 Introduction**

In the common parlance, any big city or town or for that matter any metropolis is believed to be a melting pot, where people from several cultures come and converge to become one urban mass with distinct culture. If we analyse this within the framework of science and particularly physics, we might describe it as a centripetal force of urbanization. On the other hand, there is centrifugal forces of urbanization also, which influences rural areas. Often such forces become factors of social, cultural and economic change in the rural society. In urban sociology, the process of such changes has emerged as important with number of studies being focused on social and cultural changes in rural areas.

### **18.2 Some Major Studies**

For past many decades, several authors, both from India and the West, have contributed to this branch of knowledge. A prominent scholar among them is M.N. Srinivas, who has analysed the impact of both industrialization and urbanization on rural system in great depth. He has highlighted how different areas of rural social life are being affected by urban centres. Mark Holmstrom has analysed the political network of leaders in the rural pocket within the Bangalore Corporation in the context of election. The influence of urban market on village economy has been the focus of study of D.N. Mazumdar. He has carried out this study in a village called 'Mohana' near Lucknow.

It is not necessary that the villages which are in the vicinity of the city are influenced. Often, villages which are far off from cities but has a significant proportion of its population as emigrant, exhibit high urban influences. This has been highlighted in the study of a village in U.P. by E. Eames. He notes

that since many emigrants in this village live in different cities and towns, they regularly send money back as remittances. The reason for this is that most have left their families back home. Such 'money-order' based economy has a spin-off effect in the sense that their dependents have cleared their debt and some are sending their children to schools. This implies that though this village is not in the vicinity of a city but is under the impact of urbanization. R.D. Lambert's study, too, highlights the fact of varying degree of influence of urban centres on the rural life and culture. Social changes are maximal in the area where displacement is sudden and maximum.

The most important contribution in this field has been made by M.S.A. Rao. He has argued that many villages all over India are becoming increasingly subject to the impact of urban influences. But the nature of urban impact varies according to the type of relation a village has with an urban area. This urban area could be a city or a town.

### 18.3 Urban Impact through Migration

It has been postulated that rural urban inequality in terms of economic and social wellbeing would accelerate rural urban migration. The pull factors operating through the highly productive sectors in urban centres would attract labour force from rural areas. Many among rural poor would move to urban areas in any case as a part of their survival strategy and supplement their family income in their villages. Rural economy often *plays an important role in ensuring balance between demand and supply of labour through circulation of population in different seasons of the year*.

Broadly, three different kinds of rural urban migration could be identified.

- i) First, there are villages in which a significant proportion of populations have sought employment in far off urban areas. In this situation they leave their families in villages of their birth. This situation is prevalent not only within the country but also in overseas cities. In either of the situations, such emigrants visit their village either during festivals or on family occasions. Most significantly majority of them send money regularly. In villages, because of constant flow of money to such families, the economic status is raised. In some cases, even the urban employment itself becomes the symbol of higher social status. In tangible terms, families of such emigrants have been found to build fashionable houses in their villages. They have also invested money on land and industry. Then it can be safely inferred that whether the emigrants reside in Indian or overseas cities, the feedback effect of urbanization remains significant for such villages. In this situation, the urban impact is felt by villages despite the fact that physically they are neither situated within the cities nor are near them.
- ii) Second kind of impact is felt by villages which are situated near an industrial town. These villages are exposed to several kinds of influences. The reasons for this could be a) with the coming up of an industrial town some villages might be totally up-rooted, b) lands are partially acquired, c) influx of immigrant workers, d) demand of all kinds of amenities for new residents and e) finally ordering of relationship between immigrants and native residents.

In real terms this could mean that because industrial township is coming up, so there would be employment opportunities for villagers at their door step. In other words, this means that there would be a shift in the occupational structure among the villagers. Hence villagers instead of depending only upon agriculture, would send their adult members of the family to work in the factories as well. A considerable number of workers would commute from the city to the factories and eventually may shift their residence. However, it is important to remember that urbanization due to industrialization has general as well as specific influences on the

villages. The specific influence has more to do with the nature of industry. Hence, agro based industries will encourage farmers of surrounding villages to devote more agricultural lands for that particular crop. The best example in this case could be that of sugar mills. It has been observed that farmers in villages around sugar mills tend to cultivate sugarcane on larger portion of their land.

- iii) Finally, the third type of urban impact is felt by phenomenon of ever increasing size of metropolitan cities which many times convert into megalopolis. In the above situations, normally either village is sucked in to the city as it expands or land excluding the inhabited area is used for urban development. Such situations give rise to 'rural pockets' in the city area. In such villages the landless peasants get cash compensation, which they either invest in far-off places or in commerce or squander money. The villagers in general seek urban employment. In villages where land is partially acquired, there cultivation is still possible, but then farmers take up the emerging demand in consideration while deciding for the type of crop which they cultivate. Another effect of a metropolitan city on the surrounding villages is the outflow of urban residents who wish to move out of the congested areas in the city into the open countryside.

Rural areas in the immediate periphery of large cities often act as dormitories for poor migrants who commute on daily basis, as they are unable to find a foothold in the cities. The rural periphery, which absorbs these migrants has to deal with various socio economic problems, due to deficiency of basic amenities and social fragmentation. These often lead to outbreak of epidemics, social tensions as also group conflicts, as the local residents struggle and fight with the migrant groups to access or share the limited employment opportunities and basic amenities. Furthermore, the environmental lobby gaining strength in these cities often launches measures to push out the pollutant and obnoxious industries to these areas, thereby creating a process of degenerated Peripheralisation. Understandably, this process helps the cities in reducing their infrastructural costs and pass on the responsibility and costs of social transition to peripheral villages.

Beside economic impact such villages also change in terms of political features. One of the unique features is that the villagers participate directly in the city's or corporation's politics. The slum dwellers in the periphery often constitute the vote bank for political parties. They are, thus, affected by the political process at the city, state and the national levels. This is very unlike traditional villages where political landscape is governed by intermediary structure of 'Taluk' and district. These villages have direct administrative links with cities. It should, however, be noted that not all the villages may be said to have been exposed in the same way to urban influences, for the nature of the relations of the village with the cities, and the response of the village to this situation vary from village to village.

## 18.4 Influences of Urban Areas

Rural economy in general and agriculture in particular are noted to exhibit tremendous resilience and a high capacity of internal adjustment in response to challenges posed by the process of urban development, particularly in the era of globalisation. Rural areas shoulders the major responsibility of releasing material resources, necessary for meeting the capital and current expenditures of the modern sectors that generally provide the lead in the growth process. It is also supposed to sustain the process of urban industrial development by meeting the costs of shifting of workers (along with their family members) from rural to urban areas, finding a shelter and sustenance at least during the period of transition. Further, able-bodied male labour required in the upcoming activities in towns and cities are also made available through release of workforce from within the agrarian system. More

importantly, workforce displaced in industrial sector when it comes under slump due to fluctuations in global market, technological shifts or other socio-political disturbances, often seek absorption within agriculture in the short run.

Rural areas have also been a major provider of surpluses and investible funds. During the colonial regime, the rulers often succeed in operationalising a “suction mechanism” for expropriating resources from the colonies. The process often continued even after end of the colonial rule in many less developed countries. This has led to a high disparity between agriculture and non-agricultural sectors and between rural and urban areas in terms of per capita earnings as also in other dimensions of economic and social well-being.

In this context it is important, for the purpose of generalization, to classify the influences of urban centres on villages under some broad categories, such as economic, social, cultural and political. However it must be kept in mind that all these headings encompass several sub-categories. For example under category ‘economic’ sub-categories such as occupational roles, employment pattern and shift in profession is subsumed.

#### **Reflection and Action 18.1**

In your city/town/village find out at least five people who have recently (i.e. within the last one year) have come to stay. Ask them about the reasons of their arrival in this city/town/village. Why have they chosen to move to this place? How this movement has affected their life?

Write report on “Nature of Migration in My City/Town/Village” in about two pages. Share your report with other students at your study centre.

##### **i) Economic influence**

The urban areas are synonymous with market economy. If this seems harsh, then it can be said that economy of urban areas are very different than rural areas, though to a large extent it is based on supplies from rural areas. In the order of influence it can be inferred that in return rural areas gradually gets into market economy. Bohannan and Dalton while discussing the markets in African society characterized entry into the market economy by three crieteria: a) marketing of produce with direct repercussion on production, b) selling labour and, c) buying for resale as contrasted to marketing one's own product.

##### **ii) Commercialization of agriculture**

Marketing of agricultural produce has significant social implications. This is in the sense of several roles which a villager takes up. In villages which are yet relatively untouched by the urban influences, though in today's scenario this is very unlikely, a villager as an economic being is mostly a cultivator. However, when s/he comes under the urban influence, they are likely to take up the role of farmer as well as that of a businessman. This means s/he not only has to grow those crops which has relatively higher and faster cash returns but also market them. Marketing entails arranging for quick transportation so that right price is procured. Further, there is a change in the cropping pattern i.e., a shift from growing food crop to growing vegetable, fruits, horticulture, poultry and dairy farming. In other words, market economy of urban places offers large scope of choice in terms of farming. The best example of this is when one is traveling from village to any urban area. It is apparent that as one nears any town there is more of vegetables, fruits, flowers grown than any staple food items like rice, wheat or pulses. This is not only the case for those villages which are in the vicinity of a metropolis or a city, but also with those villages which are away from urban areas but has relatively good transport and communication linkages.

Most of the time this offers good economic returns to villagers but sometime this also results in huge economic loss for a farmer in far off villages. The best example of this was apparent a few years back when there was glut of

potato in the market. Many of the farmers were neither able to sell their produce to any market nor were able to keep the produce in any storage facility. The reason for this is that a farmer makes choice of crop in a field on the basis of last year's market price. However, they do not take into consideration the fact that others are also farming the same crop and hence there is crash of market prices. In this regard it is important that farmers are provided with information on cropping pattern and adequate storage facility.

Sociologically, this shift in roles and also in cropping pattern has a significant bearing on the rural society. That is, going by certain theoretical premise, traditionally in caste system, specific castes have been associated with certain occupations with minor deviations. So an 'Ahir' was associated with dairy farming and a 'Malli' was associated with 'horticulture' though at a very nascent level. The flip side of this association of occupation with caste was that other castes considered taking up any other occupation, with which they have not been associated, less prestigious. This role of caste was in addition to its role as identity marker. Now when villagers take part in the market economy of urban areas, they after some resistance tend to cross those caste boundaries and accept new occupations. Hence the traditional cultivators i.e. growers of main food crop take growing of vegetables, fruits, flowers and tend to go into poultry and dairy farming. In this context it is important to remember that it's not that those farmers were not at all growing vegetables, fruits and flowers.. They have been doing so but only for own consumption and not as a main farming or for purpose of selling. Analytically this meant that occupational stratification on the basis of caste got gradually blurred. This in other words meant that the so-called lower castes who were also positioned lower in traditional economy, came to be at par with other castes. Hence they, as equals in new economy, had more bargaining powers which in a way was due to the new set of constraints.

The shift in occupational roles also meant that farmers have to learn new tasks, skills and purpose oriented activities such as raising vegetables, transporting and selling them. Further they were brought into relationships with the brokers at the auction market (subzimandi), and carters and the contract-gardeners in the village. At this juncture it is also important to remember that pursuit of new role was not in contradistinction but in conjunction with activities as cultivators. However, this certainly meant reorganization of resources both material and human, involving choices. Therefore, the large and medium-size farmers, who do not have adequate labour resources within household tend to go for partial mechanization of agricultural operation, hire labour and sell their crop before harvesting. Those farmers who have adequate supply of household labour but little land try to go for lease in land, concentrate on raising more short-term vegetables and cultivate their land intensively.

## 18.5 Occupational changes Particularly in Periods of Globalisation

In the context of economic influence, one must recognise that urban areas not only provide opportunity to villagers to sell their agricultural produce, but also supply labour, as noted above. The supply or availability of labour for farm activities is often affected by the employment opportunities offered by urban areas. If possession of land and adequate resources determines the entry of a villager into urban market place, education and contacts with people in influential positions in cities and towns helps them in getting the quality jobs. This however does not mean that when a villager gets a job in the urban areas, s/he gives up agricultural activities. Migrants to urban centres often get their land cultivated either by their kinsman or by employing farm laborers. But more commonly, while one member of the family takes charge of cultivation, others are encouraged taking up jobs in cities and towns.

Other than urban employment, growth of trade and commerce between cities and rural areas are also of great significance in changing the occupational structure. This category includes contract-farmers, brokers and shopkeepers. The development of such commercial activity in a rural area means entering in market economy of cities and towns through the third category mentioned by Bohannan and Dalton, i.e. buying for resale.

Urban influences also result in a household in village adopting different combinations of occupations and occupational mobility. Under the impact of modernization and globalization, many of the villagers tend to combine both traditional and modern occupations. In a household a husband may be working in urban area as clerk, peon or as call centre worker on casual or regular basis while his wife may be working as farm labour. The other trend has been that many a times a villager begins with traditional occupation and midway changes to modern occupation but is forced back to traditional occupation due to uncertain global or national market. One of the reasons offered by scholars are that traditional occupations becomes a life support system in case of job loss in urban areas. Final type of urban influence on occupational structure can be seen in situations in which traditional occupations are pursued with low earnings in modern settings of an urban area. Caste based occupations such as barber, sweepers and others, are often pursued even in towns and cities. But the only difference is that it is not governed by traditional social and economic constraints.

One important consequence of the exposure of rural economy to regional and national market through the neighbouring urban centres and resultant changes in occupational structure is sharpening of agrarian inequalities. Launching of the programmes of globalisation and structural reform in a country often leads to rapid growth of a few large cities and their peripheries. Entrepreneurs from the national and global market invest in industries, most of these coming up in and around large cities. Globalisation, unfortunately, brings little relief to agrarian economy, as the latter has no capacity to provide incentive to attract the global players. Instead, the import of agriculture and related products from international market impacts negatively the rural economy by lowering down the prices of the products. Sluggish growth in production, near stagnation in productivity often results in rise in rural unemployment. Thus, the negative impact of liberalisation becomes much more significant and visible in the rural than in urban economy.

The growing disparity between rural and urban areas during the period of globalization is expected to accelerate mobility of labour. Scholars and policy makers have often envisaged major shifts of workforce from agriculture to non-agricultural activities and from rural to urban areas. It is argued that the process would result in substantial decline in agricultural employment and corresponding increase in the high profit industrial and tertiary activities. Unfortunately, structural constraints and imperfections of labour market have inhibited or slowed down the process of this shift. Often, collapse of certain industries/activities due to slump in global market has pushed the migrants back to their rural occupations. Low productive farm and non-farm activities in rural areas have thus come under serious stress as these have become a sink for the surplus labour, sharing the limited income among larger number of households members. These households have, thus, been forced to bear the cost of unstable growth process in globalising world of today. A part of the surplus labour have, however, sought absorption in informal manufacturing and tertiary activities that have emerged in cities and towns as the "residual sector", at a low productivity level.

## 18.6 Political Influences

Political changes in the villages have close relationship with the processes of change taking place due to economic activities under urban influences.

However, these changes are also affected by wider social and political forces, administrative changes and democratic political institutions impinged upon the traditional political organization. If we analyse historically, during Mughal and British rules, the traditional authority relation i.e., leading men from dominant caste as custodians, were given due recognition. This was done keeping in mind maintaining of law and order. Till the decades of thirties this system prevailed, where dominant caste exercised political control over other castes which many times was also based upon the jajmani or patron and client relationship.

During the National freedom movements and during the post-independence period (1947 onwards) a lot of changes took place in the political structure of the villages. Part of this was due to awareness generated among various caste groups. Due to social movements such as 'Arya Samaj' and 'Brahmo Samaj' and partly because of administrative and political changes introduced after independence. The major changes came in the relationship between dominant and subordinate caste when latter had opportunity to become politically independent. As has been described above, this opportunity came with their participation not in traditional economy but outside of it. Further, this led them to become partners in the new economy instead of remaining economically subservient to the dominant castes. The change in economic status gave them more bargaining power, this includes political domain as well. The change was further influenced by privileges and benefits given to the so-called backward castes as entitlements. Also this led to the emergence of a rural middle class who had more bargaining power politically.

Similarly, the introduction of Panchayati Raj and associated regulations gave villagers belonging to lower caste and class a voice along with voting rights. This also provided opportunity to these castes to compete for positions of power in the village set up. This was also because control of panchayat meant access to the most important local resources such as land and other economic benefits that flow from development and welfare schemes; the ruling caste tries to derive the maximum benefits for its members.

In the new political era, especially after the sixties, the new developments at village political level was that new political organization parties were formed on the basis of alliances between groups or to be more precise on 'interest' groups. This was a new development when one compares this with pre-independence era, where it was based upon patron-client relationship between castes. Formation of interest groups across various caste groups meant that factionalisation of caste took place. At least in case of dominant caste this implied that chances of settlement of disputes within traditional panchayat system becomes minimal i.e. urban courts are approached for dispute settlement. This in the long run affects the so-called 'moral order' of traditional social structure.

## 18.7 Social Influences

In any society, whether be it rural or urban, various aspects are interlinked with each other. Hence, changes in one aspect has its repercussions on the others as well. Similarly, even in case of rural areas, as has been described above, economic area is the first one where change is noticed, but has its repercussions on traditional social structure as well. Moreover, a change in one area of economic organization tends to affect another economic activity. For example, an analysis of 'Jajmani system' of urban influenced village reveals that certain service relations are no longer bound by traditional constraints. In this regard it is important to note that service relationships in rural areas could be classified in three broad categories: (a) regular service relations arising out of occupational roles, (b) independent occupational roles and (c) the customary occupational roles. Same individual might be performing these roles but the set of rules governing each of the above

categories is different. Thus a barber might have ceased to shave his 'Jajmans' when village got integrated with urban economy and he became a daily commuter, but he still might be rendering customary service of messenger on ceremonial occasions.

The much fabled 'joint family system' of rural areas, is argued to have gone through tremendous changes under urban influences. It has been a general belief that with the changes in cropping pattern and occupational diversification there will be a breakup of joint family system into nuclear ones. However, evidence suggests contrary, as you learnt in unit 16: Marriage, Family and Kinship. The economic compulsion has rather forced people to continue with the joint family system, albeit a reorganization of wider kinship obligations. Sometimes it is in the economic interest of the villagers to continue living in joint family. This is also because of complementary economic interests of common landholding and job in urban market. As Aird has concluded in his study of two Muslim villages on the outskirts of Dacca, 'family structure has shown considerable resistance to the forces of social change brought about by urban contact. Only those facets which are closely tied to the economic aspects of urbanization seem to have undergone any change, and even this is slight'.

The urban influence on rural areas has also been a factor in bringing about changes in traditional status based differentiation. In rural areas, traditionally status has been based on ownership of land, however under new set this has lost much of its edge. Now status markers are income, occupation and education. Modern occupation based in urban areas brings with it prestige and even there some are more prestigious than others. That is, white collar workers are on higher pedestal than blue collar workers. Hence the caste identity which earlier defined the level of interaction between villagers seems to have realigned itself. Rather now the new status markers are bringing out new rules of interaction. In a sense this has created a sort of egalitarian grounds for the people to interact, but at the same time created new types of social differentiation.

In this context, it must also be noted that though there has been changes in the occupation, association and at broader level changes in the life style of people but certain basic principles of caste differentiation still remains intact. Those premises are endogamy, rules of inter-dining i.e. commensality and ritual hierarchy at local level. The recent developments in rural-urban relationships however has highlighted the fact that same villagers who have settled in urban areas are not very sensitive to rules of inter-dining and ritual hierarchy. Moreover, the endogamy is still very much prevalent and in some communities where it was relaxed slightly earlier are trying to reinforce with higher zeal. All these changes in some institutions and continuing with traditional values in other institutions bring out the point that people in rural areas differentiate among several spheres of social system. That is, in some respects they accept changes easily whereas in some others there is quite a big resistance. But the fact of the matter is that as soon as changes are accepted in one domain it has its rippling effect in other domains as well, only the pace varies.

## 18.8 Cultural Influences

The urban common man's understanding of rural people and their lives is often an imagined one rather than based on the reality. They believe that in rural areas people are rooted in soil, not very rational, are superstitious and always live in joint family system. Moreover, it is believed that most of the things are 'clean' and are nearer to 'nature' as compared to the life in the cities or urban areas. In other words, rural areas are always portrayed as opposed to cities or towns. In the same vain, urban areas are viewed as den of corruption, where people lead immoral, artificial and amorphous life. If we closely analyse, such portrayals, it tells us a lot about perceived cultural differences

between an urban and a rural area. Further, this also hints towards almost complete isolation of rural from urban areas and vice-e-versa. In the above section we have discussed economic influence of urban areas and also social influences. This in our understanding is a tangible influence upon rural areas. In this section, we will discuss cultural influences which are to some extent tangible but mostly intangible.

In the category of tangible cultural influences comes that aspect of social life which is visible to the world outside. This category obviously is based on apparent cultural symbols, which people use to distinguish themselves from others. This includes linguistic usage, dress, eating habits, forms of salutation and others. Similarly, within the category of intangible cultural forms are those which can be felt and described but not seen. Both forms of cultural expressions are not mutually exclusive. Rather many a times each becomes the means of expressing the other.

One of the things quite visible in villages are that when migrant workers come to their native place, they still continue to use the linguistic terms of places where they work. For example, in villages of eastern UP, from where people mostly migrate to Mumbai, they continue using terms and proverbs used in that region. Many a times it is picked by other villagers as well. Similarly, people in villages of Bihar, continue using Punjabi mixed Hindi, they pick it while working in Delhi and neighboring region, where they mostly migrate. Sometimes, these terms gets accepted in the dialect of the workers native place.

All the regions of India and specifically rural areas have specific ways of dressing and salutation. However, with migrant workers criss-crossing the length and breath of country, there seems to have emerged a uniformity of dressing pattern. Even if we don't take into account the influence of western dresses among women, 'Salwar suit' has become a pan Indian dress. Similarly, different symbols are used to connote the marital status of a woman, but 'Mangal sutras' are again assuming the pan-Indian nature, which previously was confined to a few regions of south India. On a similar note, shirts and trousers are becoming a common dress for adolescents and adult men. What is being argued here is that at some level urban influences are having a homogenizing effect on villages. The result of this is that nuances of diverse cultures of villages are getting lost. To some extent this is due to the mass media, such as, television which portrays an array of images and life style which influence both urban, as well as, rural life.

Here arises a question, under urban influences, are villagers turning to consumerism? In other words, are they are they becoming consumers? Here we must distinguish between consumer of information and consumer of FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) and other consumables. As we all are aware, post 1990's there has been kind of media deluge in all the forms-print, IT developments and mass media. The reach and penetration of these media are increasing every day leaps and bounds. It is also a fact that content of most of these media forms are determined by people living in urban areas. This has a spatial constraint as well in the sense that most of the media houses are based in urban areas. In such a scenario, the messages sent across have larger urban context. For example, if we just take note of soap operas, except for 'Neem Ka Paed' and some others almost all of them are situated in urban context. Same is true for advertisements. Similarly, in the context of movies also, except handful movies such as 'Do Bigha Zameen', 'Mirch Masala', 'Nishant' or 'Upkar', most of the movies are urban based. The urban content of all these media forms informs people living in the villages about the life style and facilities available in the cities. These informations villagers consume and aspire to achieve. In this context, village study of Dipankar Gupta, becomes very important. Though in different context, he interestingly informs that one of the villages he was able to locate 'beauty parlor' run by

so-called lower caste people. In the same context it must be noted that in today's village that some form of consumerism is also taking place, which is indicated by proliferation of 'fake' branded articles which ranges from items like toothpaste to cosmetics. One of the important reasons for proliferation is that people are not able to afford 'original' items, but this does indicate towards the fact that people in rural areas do consume. Similar is the case with FMCG goods. Sensing these only FMCG giants like Hindustan Lever Limited (HLL) and Procter and Gamble (P&G) are drawing fresh marking strategy to sell more goods. A bright example of this is villages of Punjab and Gujarat, where villagers almost possess all gadgets which any urban household has.

### Reflection and Action 18.2

Watch a film or read a novel regarding the problem of rural migrants in urban cities; such as, Mumbai, Calcutta, Chennai etc.

Write an analytical report of one page on the plight of rural migrants in cities based on this film or book. Share your report with other students and your Academic Counsellors at your study centre.

Within intangible cultural influences of urban areas upon rural populace also comes in the domain of education. The apparent sign of this is the proliferation or mushrooming of 'English medium schools' in the villages. Some people believe that this is exploitation of the aspirations of poor villagers. In this context, it should be recognized that villagers, in course of their contact with urban areas as emigrant workers, or for business or as resident of fringe villages, have witnessed the role of English education in getting jobs. Hence they aspire to send their children to English medium schools. However, given the availability of resources in villages both in terms of infrastructure and human resources, only some of the elite of the villages are able to send their children to schools. In this regard important thing to remember is that there seems to be developing a synergy of needs of urban areas and aspirations of the villagers.

## 18.9 Conclusion

In this unit you learnt about the influence of the urban cities on rural life and vice versa. As is clear, it is the urban which has far greater impact on the rural than the rural on the urban. However, some of the major studies described in this unit; such as, of Srinivas, Mark Holmstrom, D. N. Majumdar and others clearly point out that the exchange of ideas, values, style of life between the urban and rural is a continuous process where some changes are apparent and can be viewed while many others are subtle and cannot be observed. Here we have explained to you that how migration of people from villages to cities and contact of people from the cities with the villages leads to a series of changes in the economy, occupational structure; polity; society and culture of the rural areas under the impact of urbanization.

## 18.10 Further Reading

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Lambert, R.D., 'The Impact of Urban Society Upon Village Life', in R. Turner (ed.), *India's Urban Future*, University of California press, Berkeley, 1962

Srinivas, M.N., 'Caste in Modern India and Other Essays' Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962.

## **Unit 19**

### **Formal Sector**

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#### **Contents**

- 19.1 Introduction
- 19.2 Comparison between Formal/Organised and Unorganised Sectors
- 19.3 Employment Growth in Formal Organised Manufacturing
- 19.4 Characteristics of Formal Sector Employment in the Post Reform Period
- 19.5 Regional Variation in Organised Industrial Employment in India
- 19.6 A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh:
- 19.7 Conclusion
- 19.8 Further Reading

#### **Learning Objectives**

- after studying this unit, you will be able to
- compare between the formal/organized and the unorganized sectors
- discuss the employment growth in formal/organized manufacturing.
- describe the regional variation in organized industrial employment in India
- discuss case study of Andhra Pradesh in the context of characteristics of the formal sector of employment

#### **19.1 Introduction**

The urban formal sector consists of the organised sector, and can be defined as the sector consisting of activities carried out by the corporate enterprises and the Government at the Central, State and Local levels, solely with the help of wage paid labour which in a great measure is unionised.

Official statistics regarding the formal sector is available through data on the organised sector. This comprises of enterprises and information (e.g. statistical data) on their activities that are collected on a regular basis (e.g. on registered manufacturing units in the urban areas of India).

The manufacturing units are all manufacturing, processing, repair and maintenance services registered or not registered under the Factory Act 1948; and this pertains to the organised sector. That is, factories employing 10 or more (or less than 10) workers, and using power, or employing 20 or more (or less than 20 workers without power), in the reference year, belong to the registered manufacturing sector. Enterprises covered by the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), Central Statistical Organisation, fall under the purview of organised employment of the formal sector.

In India, employment was almost stagnant during the pre-liberalisation decade at the national level and experienced negative growth in the Eastern and the Western regions. The industrially developed states recorded stagnant employment while the industrially underdeveloped states showed a significant employment growth during this period. However, during post-liberalisation, all the regions experienced a marked acceleration in the employment while it was more pronounced in AGRIND or agriculture related industries in the Eastern, the Western and the Southern regions. The industrially developed states showed more pronounced acceleration in the employment in both AGRIND--agriculture related and NAGRIND--non-agriculture related industries during this period. The rise in output and increase in fixed capital in the organised manufacturing sector induced employment growth more in the Southern and Western regions during the post liberalisation decade. The industrial liberalisation accelerated employment growth in the organised manufacturing sector more in the industrially developed states such as West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. However, some states like Bihar, Delhi and Punjab experienced deceleration in employment growth during the post liberalisation period.

## **19.2 Comparison between Formal/Organised and Unorganised Sectors**

The labour force in all developing economies consists of two broad sectors, the organised and unorganised sectors. In the organised sector, the labour productivity is likely to be high, incomes even in unskilled category are relatively high and conditions of work and services are protected by labour legislations and trade unions

The major comparisons between these two sectors can be summed up as follows –

- 1. The Market Structure:** The large manufacturing firms in the formal, organised sector operate in markets where prices are controlled by few sellers, which are protected from

foreign competition by high tariffs. They sell products mainly to middle and upper income groups. On the other hand the unorganised sectors consist of a large number of small producers operating on narrow margins in highly competitive markets. The products are sold to low-income groups.

2. **Credit Facilities:** The organised sector has greater access to cheap credit provided by various financial institutions while the unorganised sector often depends on the money-lenders who charge a high rate of interest.
3. **Technology:** The formal organised sector uses capital-intensive technologies and imported technology while the unorganised sector uses mainly labour intensive and indigenous technology.
4. **Role of Government:** The organised sector has a privileged position as far as the Government is concerned because it has an easy access to and influence over Government machinery; it can build lobbies and pressurize the Government on an issue, while the unorganised has no political pull.
5. **Protection:** Lastly, the organised sector is protected by various types of labour legislations and backed by strong unions. The unorganised sector is either not covered by labour legislation at all or is so scattered that the implementation of legislation is very inadequate or ineffective. There are hardly any unions in this sector to act as watch dogs.

### **19.3 Employment Growth in Formal Organised Manufacturing**

During the 1980s, employment in the organised sector was virtually stagnant, which had substantially increased in the 1990s. Between 1980-81, and 1990-91, employment in organised manufacturing grew at the rate 0.53 percent per annum. In the next five years, 1990-91 to 1995-96, the growth rate was much higher 4.03 percent per annum, comparing favourably with the growth rate achieved in the 1970s (about 3.8 percent per annum between 1970-71 and 1980-81). In the period 1990-91 to 1997-98, the growth rate of employment was 2.69 percent, well above the growth rate achieved in the 1980s and higher than the growth rate of the labour force.

Effect of the Economic Reforms on the Formal Sector:

The marked acceleration of employment growth according to some scholars in the formal sector, in organised activities, can be attributed to the process of major economic reforms that was initiated in India in 1991. It has been pointed out that the favourable effects in employment was

due to greater labour flexibility and increased trade orientation to changes in the structure of industries in favour of labour intensive industries and techniques of production (Singh 1993, Papola 1994).

On the other hand, it has been also pointed out by scholars that in some other ways the new economic policy is expected to have adverse effect on industrial employment. For instance, economic reforms have resulted in increased competition, improved access to foreign technology and imported capital goods. This has resulted in a drive by industrial firms towards the adoption of advanced technology, which is likely to lead to increasing capital intensity of production (Ghose 1994). Also, as competition intensifies, industrial firms may try to save cost and become more competitive by cutting down on employment, particularly those firms (e.g. public sector units) that are characterised by overstaffing. Many scholars therefore are advocates of this pessimistic viewpoint of economic reforms on the formal sector (Mundle, 1992, 1993; Deshpande 1992; Bhattacharya and Mitra 1993; Mitra 1993; Agarwal and Goldar 1995; Kundu 1997), and point out to the fact that the adverse effects may be so strong that they may outweigh the favourable effects of the economic reforms in the long run.

## **19.4 Characteristics of Formal Sector Employment in the Post Reform Period**

### **1. Public Sector, Private Sector and Joint Sector Growth in Employment**

Table 1. Growth in Employment in Organised Industry, Private and Public Sectors

	Employment (000)				Growth Rate (Percent per Annum)		
	1973-74	1980-81	1990-91	1997-98	1973-80	1980-90	1990-97
Public Sector	1365	2049	2323	2388	5.971	1.265	0.391
Private and Joint Sector (including unspecified)	4455	5666	5839	7538	3.495	0.302	3.715
Aggregate ASI (including electricity)	5820	7715	8163	9926	4.108	0.566	2.834

Source: ASI

The above table presents a comparison of employment growth rate between public sector and private sector (including joint sector) factories. It can be discerned from the above table that in the 1970's employment grew rapidly in both the public and private sector factories. There was a sharp deceleration in employment growth in the 1980's in both the public and private sector factories. In the 1990's the growth rate of employment in the public sector factories has come down further. It was only 0.4 percent per annum between 1990-91 and 1997-98. By contrast, the growth rate of employment in private sector factories has recovered and surpassed the growth rate prevailing in the 1970's with the consequence that almost the entire increase in employment in organised manufacturing that has taken place in the 1990's can be accounted for by public sector factories.

## **2. Distribution of Employment by Size Class of Factories**

Table 2. Distribution of Employment by Factory Size

Factory Size Class	Distribution of Employment (Percent)				Growth Rate (Percent per Annum)		
	1973-74	1980-81	1990-91	1997-98	1973-80	1980-90	1990-97
0-49	14.4	13.8	17.5	16.8	3.477	2.983	2.201
50-99	8.2	9.0	10.8	13.1	5.502	2.416	5.686
100-199	9.4	9.2	10.7	12.9	3.789	2.096	5.652
200-499	13.1	12.1	13.5	19.0	2.934	1.673	7.979
500-999	11.6	9.7	12.0	13.6	1.481	2.729	4.711
1000-1999	12.8	13.7	10.1	9.4	5.124	-2.454	1.815
2000-4999	16.7	15.9	9.5	10.0	3.381	-4.482	3.649
5000+	13.8	16.6	15.9	5.2	6.892	0.134	-12.438
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4.108</b>	<b>0.566</b>	<b>2.835</b>

Source: ASI

The distribution of employment by size class of factories shows that there was a marked change in the size structure in the 1980s and more so in the 1990s. The size class 50-500 employment gained, while the size classes 2000-4999 and 5000+ lost heavily. Since the factories in the lower employment size classes are more labour intensive, these changes in size structure had a favourable effect on employment growth. The size class 5000+ is the most capital intensive and least labour intensive and the sharp decline in the relative share of this size class in the 1990s and the increase in the relative shares of the size classes 50-99, 100-199 and 200-499 must have made a significant contribution to employment growth in this period (Goldar, 2000).

In this context, it can be said that the economic policy regime has a major influence on the size structure of industries in the formal sector. In the early 1960s factory employment was heavily concentrated in very large establishments (Little 1986). The share of small and medium sized factories was relatively small. This imbalance in the structure of the manufacturing sector was largely a consequence of the economic policies of the Government.

### **3. Growth Rates of Employment and Gross Value Added**

Table 3: Growth Rates in Employment and Gross value Added: Two-Digit Industries  
(Percent per Annum)

Industry Code	1980-90	1990-97	1980-90	1990-97
20-21	-1.58	2.70	12.03	7.39
22	3.71	2.95	8.48	7.83
23	-3.17	0.58	2.63	0.26
24	3.02	2.67	13.79	8.35
25	-3.00	1.06	-4.24	6.56
26	5.62	11.37	14.63	10.44
27	-1.79	1.80	5.71	-6.74
28	0.45	2.30	5.54	3.54
29	5.91	2.24	11.67	10.46
30	1.16	5.22	10.30	9.83
31	3.73	4.72	14.31	5.82
32	2.03	0.30	11.54	4.29
33	0.73	0.91	6.55	11.15
34	1.58	2.83	3.06	9.98
35+36+39	3.54	2.56	8.62	7.21
37	-0.18	2.10	7.13	9.39
38	2.81	7.14	11.96	18.98
Manufacturing	0.53	2.69	8.67	7.4

Two Digit Industry Code:

20-21: food products; 22: Beverages, tobacco; 23: cotton textiles; 24: wool, silk, man made fibre textiles; 25: jute and other textiles; 26: textile products; 27: wood and wood products; 28: paper and paper products; 29: leather and leather products; 30: chemical and chemical products; 31: rubber, plastics and petroleum products; 32: non-metallic mineral products; 33: basic metal and alloys; 34: metal products and parts; 35-36: machinery and equipment; 37: transport equipment; 38: other manufacturing industries and 39: repair of capital goods.

Protection, investment incentives, credit control and promotion of industry in the public sector discriminated against the small and favoured capital intensive, large scale establishments (Little 1986). The change in the size structure that has taken place in the 1980s and 1990s, a decline in the relative share of big units and a rise in the share of small and medium size factories is arguably a correction of the structural imbalance prevailing earlier.

Since the imbalance in the size structure was largely a consequence of economic policies, the correction that has taken place in the last two decades may be attributed, at least in part, to changes in economic policy, specially in liberalisation of industrial and trade policies.

It is seen that the growth rate of employment increased in the 1990s in most industries. There was almost across-the-board acceleration in employment growth. As against that, the growth rate of value added declined after 1990 in a majority of industries even at the aggregate level. Therefore it appears that some common factors have favoured employment growth in a large number of industries in the post reform period even though output growth has not accelerated.

#### **4. Growth Rate in Real Wages (Product wage) and Man days per Employee**

Table 4. Growth Rates of Real Wages and Man day per Employee: Two Digit Industries  
(Percent per Annum)

Industry (code)	Real Wages Growth Rate		Man day per Employee Growth rate	
	1980-90	1990-97	1980-90	1990-97
20-21	10.74	1.75	5.24	0.59
22	2.17	1.61	0.47	0.75
23	3.64	-1.61	0.72	-0.11
24	6.26	3.32	0.41	-0.09
25	1.42	4.38	0.30	-0.44
26	3.25	0.77	0.26	-0.05
27	4.90	-7.29	0.54	0.56
28	2.48	3.29	0.34	0.00
29	0.35	6.38	0.15	0.05
30	6.70	1.04	0.79	0.00
31	3.92	5.04	1.03	0.19
32	2.56	3.53	-0.15	1.39
33	1.74	5.12	0.33	-0.20
34	0.76	5.08	0.29	0.31
35+36+39	4.17	3.04	0.38	0.05
37	4.10	5.64	0.21	-0.40
38	7.83	5.95	-0.36	-0.37
Manufacturing	4.84	2.08	1.11	0.14

Two Digit Industry Code:

20-21:food products; 22:Beverages, tobacco; 23:cotton textiles; 24:wool, silk, man made fibre textiles; 25: jute and other textiles; 26: textile products; 27: wood and wood products; 28: paper and paper products; 29: leather and leather products; 30: chemical and chemical products; 31: rubber, plastics and petroleum products; 32: non-metallic mineral products; 33: basic metal and alloys; 34: metal products and parts; 35-36: machinery and equipment; 37: transport equipment; 38: other manufacturing industries and 39: repair of capital goods.

It is also seen that in 1980s employment declined in four two-digit industries: 20-21: food products, 23: cotton textiles, 25: jute textiles and 27: wood products. These industries are labour intensive and accounted for 41 percent of the total manufacturing employment in 1980. In all these cases, the downward trend in employment was arrested in the 1990s and reversed.

The above table reveals that the growth rate of real wages in aggregate manufacturing declined significantly in the 1990s, and this occurred also in a majority of industries.

Furthermore, the inter-industry pattern of changes in rates of growth in employment and real wages, an inverse relationship can be seen between the two: the extent of acceleration in employment growth is generally higher in those industries in which there has been a greater decline in the growth rate of real wages.

Nagaraj (1994) and Bhalotra (1998) have laid considerable stress on the increase in man days per employee as a cause of sluggish employment growth in 1980s. The above table shows, however, that the increase in man days per employee was rapid only in the case of food products industry; for the rest, the rate of increase was not high. At the aggregate level, the rate of increase in man days per employee was 1.11 percent per annum, which, to a large extent was due to the increase that took place in food products industry. Thus, it seems Nagaraj and Bhalotra have given undue emphasis on this factor as a cause of jobless industrial growth in 1980s. Also, the change in the growth rate of man days per employee between the two periods is small for most industries (as can be seen from the table above) and this cannot be a major cause of the acceleration in employment growth in 1990s.

### **Reflection and Action 19.1**

From the above section you came to know about the organized and the unorganized sectors. In the area where you live find out about its industrial growth and manufacturing unit(s). Write a report of about two pages on the “Organised and the Unorganized Sector” in your area or surrounding area of your city/town or village.

Discuss your report with those of other learners at your Study Center.

## **19.5 Regional Variation in Organised Industrial Employment in India**

### **1. Pre-Liberalisation Period (1980-81-1991-92)**

Average annual growth rate in organised industrial employment in India during this decade was very small, about 0.6 percent per annum. However, there were four states in which the absolute level of employment declined during this period: Bihar, West Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The biggest single decline was in the state of West Bengal, which accounted for 75 percent of the total decline in these four states. The states showing not marginal but significant increase in employment were Haryana, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, while Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh also showed some gains compared to their industrial employment level in 1980-81.

At the regional level, the biggest gainer was the Southern region, due mainly to Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, while the biggest loser was the Eastern region due to West Bengal. Indeed, the major gaining as well as the losing states were amongst industrially developed states: Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Haryana, Punjab and Delhi were the gaining states, while the major losing states were also the ID (industrially developed) states of West Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The IUD (industrially underdeveloped) state that showed major gain was Andhra Pradesh, though Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh and even Orissa showed some gain.

The conflicting movement amongst ID (industrially developed) states left the size of their total industrial workforce nearly unchanged while that of the IUD (industrially underdeveloped) states distinctly improved.

The ID (industrially developed) states lost in employment in agriculture-related industries (AGRIND) but gained in non-agriculture related industries (NAGRIND). The IUD (industrially underdeveloped) states on the other hand showed stagnation in agriculture-related industries, but distinct gain in non-agriculture related industries.

Which industry groups were mainly responsible for the significant decline in 3ID states of West Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra? In West Bengal the decline was across-the-board in all the 2-digit industry groups with the sole exception of beverages, tobacco and tobacco products (22).

In Gujarat, the decline was confined to four industry groups: food products (20-21), beverages, tobacco and tobacco and tobacco products (22), cotton textiles (23), wood and wood products, furniture and fixtures (27), while the dominated declining industry being cotton textiles (23). This affected the over all industrial employment in the state adversely.

In Maharashtra, the decline was relatively more widespread: in food and food products (20-21), cotton textiles (23), wool, silk and synthetic fibre textiles (24), wood and wood products, furniture and fixtures (27), paper and paper products (28), basic metals and alloy industries (33), metal products and parts (37), though here also cotton textiles (23) recorded the biggest decline.

There was an overall decline in AGRIND (agriculture related industries), in the order of about 2.5 lakh employees between 1980-81 and 1991-92. This was due to the overwhelming decline in the three states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and West Bengal. In Maharashtra, employment in AGRIND declined by 1.4 lakh, in Gujarat by 1.1 lakh and in West Bengal by 1.3 lakh. However, this decline in AGRIND was not a widespread phenomenon across the country. In the Southern region, employment in AGRIND increased by about a lakh in each of the two states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Table 5: Regional Distribution of Employees in Organised Manufacturing in India

(In percent)

State	1980-81			1991-92			1997-98		
	Mfg (2-3)	AGRIND	NAGRIND	Mfg (2-3)	AGRIND	NAGRIND	Mfg (2-3)	AGRIND	NAGRIND
AS	1.68	1.47	0.20	1.64	1.31	0.33	1.50	1.09	0.41
BH	4.72	1.28	3.44	4.39	0.65	3.74	2.98	0.50	2.48
OR	1.48	0.60	0.88	1.76	0.61	1.16	1.63	0.54	1.09
WB	13.20	6.52	6.67	9.49	4.30	5.19	8.69	4.79	3.90
<u>ER</u>	<u>21.26</u>	<u>9.95</u>	<u>11.31</u>	<u>17.48</u>	<u>6.95</u>	<u>10.53</u>	<u>14.98</u>	<u>7.00</u>	<u>7.97</u>
DL	1.66	0.79	0.87	1.91	0.80	1.11	1.45	0.61	0.83
HR	2.28	0.83	1.45	3.14	1.11	2.03	3.16	1.03	2.12
PNJ	2.89	1.42	1.47	3.87	1.87	2.00	3.73	1.83	1.90
UP	9.23	6.03	3.20	9.07	4.62	4.45	7.66	3.94	3.72
<u>NR</u>	<u>16.61</u>	<u>9.38</u>	<u>7.23</u>	<u>18.65</u>	<u>8.72</u>	<u>9.93</u>	<u>16.85</u>	<u>7.89</u>	<u>8.96</u>
AP	8.73	6.44	2.29	10.99	7.56	3.43	11.18	7.72	3.46
KT	5.13	2.74	2.39	5.34	2.35	2.99	6.63	2.82	3.81
KRL	3.59	2.65	0.94	3.49	2.25	1.24	3.81	2.54	1.27
TN	10.24	5.63	4.62	12.54	6.59	5.95	13.62	7.52	6.10
<u>SR</u>	<u>28.01</u>	<u>17.74</u>	<u>10.27</u>	<u>32.71</u>	<u>18.99</u>	<u>13.72</u>	<u>35.70</u>	<u>20.85</u>	<u>14.85</u>
GJ	9.71	6.03	3.69	8.75	4.03	4.73	9.30	3.70	5.61

MP	3.89	2.12	1.78	4.27	2.04	2.24	4.32	1.79	2.53
MH	18.21	8.87	9.34	15.05	6.43	8.62	15.40	6.21	9.20
RJ	2.11	1.03	1.08	2.75	1.22	1.53	2.75	1.31	1.44
<u>WR</u>	<u>34.12</u>	<u>18.12</u>	<u>16.01</u>	<u>31.17</u>	<u>13.83</u>	<u>17.34</u>	<u>32.48</u>	<u>13.21</u>	<u>19.27</u>
ID States	63.32	32.83	30.50	60.09	27.48	32.62	61.98	28.51	33.47
IUD States	35.43	21.62	13.81	38.36	20.26	18.12	35.83	19.43	16.40
16 States	98.76	54.45	44.31	98.45	47.74	50.74	97.81	47.94	49.87
ROI	1.24	0.73	0.51	1.55	0.75	0.77	2.19	1.00	1.19
INDIA	100.00	55.18	44.82	100.00	48.49	51.51	100.00	48.94	51.06

Note: Mfg (2-3) sector, these figures may not add upto total due to rounding; AGRIND – agriculture related industries; NAGRIND – Non-agriculture related industries, AS – Assam; BH-Bihar; OR-Orissa; WB-West Bengal; ER – Eastern Region; DL – Delhi; HR – Haryana; PNJ – Punjab; UP-Uttar Pradesh; NR – Northern Region; AP – Andhra Pradesh; KT – Karnataka; KRL – Kerala; TN; Tamil Nadu; SR – Southern Region; GJ – Gujarat; MP – Madhya Pradesh; MH – Maharashtra; RJ – Rajasthan; WR – Western Region; ID Industrially Developed; IUD – Industrially Underdeveloped; ROI – Rest of India

Even a state like Orissa recorded a 40,000 increase during the decade. The agriculture related industries that showed significant growth in employment in Andhra Pradesh as well as in Karnataka were wool, silk and synthetic fibres (24), cotton textile products (25), and leather and leather products (29); in Tamil Nadu they were jute, hemp and mesta industry (25), cotton textile products (26), and leather and leather goods (29) with cotton textiles (23) to a smaller extent. Thus, the tremendous decline in cotton textile industry (23) in Maharashtra and Gujarat was not seen in Tamil Nadu, but the contrary.

Unlike in AGRIND, there was an overall increase in employment in NAGRIND (non-agriculture related industries), during this decade by nearly 7 lakh employees. The only exception was in the two states of West Bengal and Maharashtra, both ID states. In these two states, which together accounted for 31 percent of the total industrial employment in 1981 (of which over half, 16 percent, was in non-agriculture related industries), the employment in non-agriculture industries declined by 79,000 of which West Bengal alone accounted for 69,000.

While in West Bengal the decline was in all NAGRIND groups, in Maharashtra, it was confined to basic metal industries (33), metal products and parts (34), machinery, machine tools and parts (35, 36) and transport equipment and parts (37).

Northern states like Haryana and Uttar Pradesh also showed decline in these industries. But metal products and parts (34), machinery, machine tools and parts (35, 36) and transport equipment and parts (37) recorded a distinct rise in employment in the Southern states.

Thus, while the group of employment in non-agricultural related industries was not very high during the decade (1.77 percent a year), the decline was only in the two states of Maharashtra and West Bengal. West Bengal stands out as the only state that registered all round decline in industrial employment in the decade of the 1980s; the reasons for which may be quite state specific.

All in all, both in agriculture-related and non-agriculture related industries, the decline in employment in the 80s appears to have been quite state specific. No across the board explanation can be provided for this.

## **2. Post-Liberalisation Period (1991-92-1997-98)**

The growth in employment in the organised manufacturing sector in India during the post-liberalisation period was distinctively higher, 4.15 percent per annum as against 0.6 percent in the preceding decade.

All states except Bihar and Delhi recorded positive growth. The states that recorded higher than the all India growth rate was Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

The Southern states recorded the highest growth rate (5.88 percent), the Western region coming next (4.7 percent), with the Northern and Eastern regions far behind (2.2 and 1.5 percent respectively. The result was that the Southern region, which had 28.01 percent of the total industrial labour force in 1981 and 32.71 percent in 1991-92, came to have 35.7 percent of the total industrial labour force by 1997-98. The Western region's share declined from 34.12 percent in 1980-81 to 32.48 percent in 1997-98, though this was a slight improvement over 31.17 percent to which the share had declined in 1991-92. The share of the Northern region remained unchanged. Clear and sharp decline was seen in the Eastern region which had 21.26 percent in 1980-81 but declined to 14.98 percent in 1997-98, despite the fact that both Orissa and Assam recorded 3.69 percent and 3.33 percent growth rates during the post liberalisation period. The

reason for the worsening position of the eastern region was the sharp decline of West Bengal as an industrial state.

Table 6: Annual Compound Growth Rate of Employment in the Organised Manufacturing Sector of the States and Regions of India during 1980-81 to 1997-98

Region	1980-81 to 1997-98	1980-81 to 1991-92	1991-92 to 1997-98	Col 4-Col 3
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
AS	1.31	0.47	3.33	2.86
BH	-0.72	0.04	-2.51	-2.55
OR	2.62	2.17	3.69	1.52
WB	-1.41	-3.00	2.46	5.46
<i>ER</i>	-0.63	-1.51	1.50	3.01
DL	1.79	2.58	-0.04	-2.62
HR	3.48	2.70	5.33	2.63
PNJ	3.43	4.07	1.92	-2.15
UP	0.81	0.61	1.27	0.66
<i>NR</i>	1.97	1.84	2.28	0.44
AP	3.05	2.31	4.82	2.51
KT	2.96	1.08	7.55	6.47
KRL	2.24	0.48	6.56	6.08
TN	3.35	2.39	5.68	3.29
<i>SR</i>	3.07	1.91	5.88	3.97
GJ	1.05	-0.61	5.09	5.70
MP	2.44	1.97	3.58	1.61
MH	0.75	-0.73	4.36	5.09
RJ	3.47	2.96	4.68	1.72
<i>WR</i>	1.34	-0.04	4.70	4.74
ID States	1.42	0.11	4.61	4.50
IUD States	1.87	1.34	3.13	1.79
INDIA	1.63	0.60	4.15	3.55

Note: AS – Assam; BH-Bihar; OR-Orissa; WB-West Bengal; ER – Eastern Region; DL – Delhi; HR – Haryana; PNP – Punjab; UP-Uttar Pradesh; NR – Northern Region; AP – Andhra Pradesh; KT – Karnataka; KRL – Kerala; TN; Tamil Nadu; SR – Southern Region; GJ – Gujarat; MP – Madhya Pradesh; MH – Maharashtra; RJ – Rajasthan; WR – Western Region; ID Industrially Developed; IUD – Industrially Underdeveloped.

This state had incidentally more industrial workers than the entire Northern region and had the second highest industrial labour force next only to Maharashtra in 1980-81 (13.2 percent) saw a decline to its share to 8.69 percent by 1997-98 thus becoming the 5<sup>th</sup> among the states, Tamil Nadu now taking its earlier position. In fact, the absolute decline in the size of West Bengal's labour force, which occurred in the 1980s, could not be made up in the 1990s; its rate of growth being lower than even Orissa's and Assam's. There is a clear indication of industrial shift of the formal labour force to the south of the Vindhyas.

During this period, there has been a slight increase in the share of the agriculture related industries (AGRIND) of India. Two states Bihar and Delhi, registered an absolute decline in the labour force in this sector. There was a near stagnation or a very small increase in a few other states, like Assam and Uttar Pradesh. The real large increase however was in the states of West Bengal and in the states of the Southern and Western region. In the Western region, the total number of employees increased by about 1.5 lakh, in West Bengal alone by more than a lakh, and in the four Southern states by about 4.5 lakh. Indeed the Southern region alone showed significant rise in the share of total employees in this sector, from 18.99 percent to 20.85 percent in seven years. The result was that the share of this labour increased in the ID states and declined in the IUD states.

On examining the changes by 2-digit industry groups for AGRIND, it becomes clear that the employment in food and food products industries (20-21), registered a positive growth in all such areas except Bihar, and all the states of the Northern region. Employment in beverages, tobacco and tobacco product industries (22), registered an increase in West Bengal, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu; and registered a decline in Haryana, Delhi, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh. In the remaining states, it was either essentially stagnant or non-existent. Employment in cotton textile industry (23), declined in all the four states of Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Gujarat, while registering an increase only in Madhya Pradesh and Kerala; elsewhere there was clear stagnation. Employment in wool, silk and synthetic textile industry (24) showed a decline in Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Gujarat while it recorded a distinct rise only in Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. In the other states, it was stagnant. The jute, hemp and mesta textile industry (25), registered increase in three Eastern states except Assam, and in Tamil Nadu while it distinctly declined in Andhra Pradesh. The employment in the textile product industry (26), recorded an increase only in Orissa in the eastern region; in Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh in the Northern region; and in almost all states in the Western and Southern regions. Employment in wood and wood products, furniture, fixtures industries (27), recorded a decline in Assam, West Bengal, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, and showed an increase in Bihar, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Kerala. Paper and paper products industries (28), showed an increase in all the states in the Eastern region, in all the states in the Western region and in Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Leather and leather product industries (29), registered increase

in Haryana, Punjab and Gujarat, but declined in Orissa, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

Thus the increase in employment was mainly in food and food products industry (20-21), beverages, tobacco and tobacco products (22), and in textile products (26), in most of the states. The Western and Southern states recorded more wide spread increase.

In NAGRIND, it was seen that three states, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka, recorded widespread increase in almost all industry groups and states in the Western and Southern region recorded employment in many industry groups resulting in the highest rate of increase in the Western region, and the next highest in the Southern region. As against this, the Eastern states recorded a negative growth rate mainly because of the strong decline in Bihar and stagnancy in West Bengal. Indeed, Assam recorded a high rate of growth, with Orissa coming next; but these could not pull up the overall growth rate of the Eastern region, due to the prevailing situation in Bihar and West Bengal.

### **Reflection and Action 19.2**

Read carefully the following section on Andhra Pradesh: Characteristic of Formal Sector Employment. Visit a local library and try to find out if there are details available of any other state (better if it is your own state; if it is not Andhra Pradesh).

Write down the details and discuss it with your Academic Counsellors, as well as the students at your study center.

## **19.6 A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh: Characteristics of Formal Sector Employment**

The work participation rates in Andhra Pradesh had been much higher than the all India levels, though the younger age groups are engaged in education for longer periods that keep them away from labour.

Table 7: Urban Work Participation Rate

Year	Andhra Pradesh	All India
1983	34.8	34.0

1987-88	35.8	33.7
1993-94	37.6	34.7
1999-2000	34.8	33.7

Source: NSS Rounds on Employment and Unemployment (38<sup>th</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup>)

In Andhra Pradesh, 20.5 lakh workers were in the formal sector of organised manufacturing in 1998, against a total of approximately 387.5 lakh workers. In other words, organised sector workers form only around 5.5 percent, while unorganised sector workers constitute the bulk, around 94.5 percent, of the total labour force in Andhra Pradesh. Jobs in the urban formal sectors usually provide much higher wages, and also provide greater job security and other benefits than other sectors.

Table 8: Male Female Urban Work Participation Rate: Andhra Pradesh and India

Year	Andhra Pradesh	All India
<b>Male</b>		
1993-94	54.4	52.0
1999-2000	51.1	51.8
<b>Female</b>		
1993-94	19.9	15.4
1999-2000	17.8	13.9

Source: NSS Rounds on Employment and Unemployment (50<sup>th</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup>)

Employment in the organised sectors in Andhra Pradesh increased from 12.36 lakh in 1975-76 to 20.72 lakh in 1999-2000, in the urban areas.

Table 9: Employment in the Organised Sector in Andhra Pradesh

Years	Employment (in lakh)	Period	Compound Growth Rate
1975-76	12.36	1975-76 to 1980-81	3.2
1980-81	14.46	1980-81 to 1985-86	2.2
1985-86	16.11	1985-86 to 1990-91	1.8
1990-91	17.63	1990-91 to 1995-96	1.9
1995-96	19.42	1995-96 to 1999-2000	1.6
1996-97	20.42		
1997-98	20.51		
1998-99	20.59		
1999-2000	20.72		

Source: Various Issues of Economic Survey, Government of Andhra Pradesh

The above table shows a deceleration in the growth of employment in the organised sector in Andhra Pradesh over time. In the later part of the 1990s, the growth rate was about 1.6 percent per annum. In fact, since 1996-97, increase in organised employment in Andhra Pradesh has been marginal. One of the main reasons for the lower growth of organised employment is the

slow down of the public sector employment in the 1990s, already dealt with earlier, and Andhra Pradesh is no exception to it.

In Andhra Pradesh, the public sector accounts for 70-80 percent of organised employment in the formal sector. The growth rate of public sector employment in the 1970s and 1980s was quite high. On the other hand, the private sector employment had been growing at the rate of 4.8 percent per annum in the 1990s. But the growth in the private sector has not been able to compensate the loss in the public sector.

In Andhra Pradesh, for the males, marginal increase was noticed in non-farm employment such as construction, trade and transport. The share in manufacturing has not increased over time. In case of females, rise is mainly in the services.

### **Unemployment and Poverty**

Unemployment rate is the ratio of unemployed to the total labour force. In the urban areas of Andhra Pradesh, the unemployment rates are relatively higher than the rural areas. Again, unemployment rates are higher among the male population than the female. However, in recent years, urban unemployment in Andhra Pradesh has shown only marginal increase compared to the rural areas.

Table 10: Unemployment Rates in Urban Andhra Pradesh and India: 1983-2000

Year	USUAL STATUS				DAILY STATUS			
	Andhra Pradesh		India		Andhra Pradesh		India	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1983	5.4	5.1	5.9	6.9	9.4	12.1	9.2	11.0
1987-88	6.4	9.0	6.1	8.5	10.1	13.2	8.8	12.0
1993-94	3.5	4.3	5.4	8.3	7.5	9.5	6.7	10.4
1999-2000	4.3	4.4	4.8	7.1	7.7	9.7	7.3	9.4

Source: Different Rounds of NSSO data.

### **19.7 Conclusion**

Thus, while organised employment in the formal sector remained virtually stagnant in the 1980s, there has been a marked acceleration in the growth of employment in the 1990s. Acceleration in employment growth is found both at the aggregate level and for most industries; even though there had been considerable inter-regional differences. This may be partly explained by changes in the size structure in favour of small and medium sized factories. Another important

explanation for the acceleration in employment growth seems to lie in a slow down in the growth in real wages.

During the pre-liberalisation period, organised manufacturing in the urban formal sector of India experienced “jobless growth”. However, the Northern and Southern regions recorded relatively high growth of employment even during pre-liberalisation. The Eastern and the Western regions experienced a fall in employment during this period in the organised manufacturing sector. The industrially developed states experienced a stagnant employment growth while industrially underdeveloped states recorded employment growth of 1.34 percent per annum. West Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra registered negative employment growth while high growth was recorded by Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan during this period.

During the post-liberalisation period, the employment growth was 4.15 percent per annum in organised manufacturing. The industrially developed states registered a very marked rise in employment during this period in the organised manufacturing sector. The Southern and Western regions showed a high acceleration in employment growth. Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Gujarat registered employment growth by more than 5 percent during this period. All the states, except Bihar, Delhi, and Punjab experienced acceleration in employment growth during this period in organised manufacturing.

Finally, it must be said that special employment and anti-poverty programmes of the Government of India had been mostly targeted towards the rural areas. Mention must be made of the programmes that may have an impact on the urban formal sector, viz the Nehru Rozgar Yojana and Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP).

The Rozgar Yojna is a scheme aimed at helping educated unemployed youth in establishing self-employed ventures, which may not necessarily be formal. The scheme was in operation in urban areas in 1991-94.

The Nehru Rozgar Yojana is aimed at creating employment opportunities through three schemes such as wage employment, micro enterprises and shelter upgradation for the urban poor. Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP) was launched during 1995-96 with the specific objective of effective achievement of social sector goals, community empowerment, employment generation, and skill upgradation, shelter upgradation and environmental improvement with a multi-prolonged and long term strategy. The programme is

said to cover 5 million urban poor living in 345 Class II Urban Agglomerations, with a population of 50,000 to 100,000 lakh each. There would be a provision of Rs 800 crores as Central share for the entire programme period of five years.

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## **Unit 20**

# **Urban Informal Sector**

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### **Contents**

- 20.1 Introduction
- 20.2 Formal Sector and Informal Sector
- 20.3 Dimensions of the Urban Informal Sector in India
- 20.4 Growth of Small Scale Industries
- 20.5 Composition of the Informal Sector
- 20.6 Case Studies of Government Workers
- 20.7 Conclusion
- 20.8 Further Reading

### **Learning Objectives**

After you read this unit you will be able to:

- distinguish the formal sector and the informal sector
- describe the different dimensions of the urban informal sector in India
- discuss the growth of small scale industries
- explain the composition of the informal sector; and
- describe the case studies of government workers in the informal section

### **20.1 Introduction**

In this unit we will discuss about the informal sector in the urban areas. The last Census, held in 2001, showed that around 27% of the population resided in urban areas and the rest in rural areas. The labour force in the country numbered 370 million. Of this a mere 7.5% (around 27 million) was engaged in the formal sector while 370 million were engaged in the informal sector. Women constituted one-third of those engaged in the informal sector and one-seventh of those employed in the formal sector. Around than 250 million workers were engaged in the rural informal sector. The urban informal sector comprised around 100 million workers.

In the following section we will discuss about how the informal sector came into prominence. This will be followed by a section on the definition of the informal sector. In the later sections we will take up case studies on this sector, especially those

involving women, as they are the most vulnerable section in the economy. These include the garment industry...

## 20.2 Formal Sector and Informal Sector

In the previous unit, No. 19 on **Formal Sector** we have already explained the difference between the formal or organized sector and the informal or the unorganised sector of the economy in India. Here again we will repeat some of the details for your clarity.

The distinction between the formal and informal sectors is crucial for understanding employment relations. Workers in the formal sector are engaged in factories, commercial and service establishments and their working conditions, wages and social security measures are legally protected. The wages of formal sector workers are substantially higher than those engaged in the urban informal sector. Moreover, a range of labour laws, guaranteeing permanency of employment and provision for retirement benefits, protect their jobs.

What is noted above is the formal sector, hence the question is: what is the informal sector? One way of answering this question is: workers who are not in the formal sector are in the informal sector. This may not be a satisfactory explanation as far as we are concerned because it is identified through exclusion. We do not know what the characteristics of this sector are.

Interestingly, this is precisely how this sector was described when it was “discovered” by academics and policy makers. In 1970, J. Keith Hart, an anthropologist who specialised in African societies, was working for a research project of the International Labour Organisation. He was studying the labour market in Accra, Ghana. He found that all the wage earners do not come under the labour market rules. Hart was from a developed country where most activities were in the formal sector. Workers worked in large factories, people bought their groceries from departmental stores and other requirements were bought from large departmental stores. There were laws that regulated their employment conditions and workers were to some extent unionised. In other words there were formal relations between workers and employers and workers and the state (Hart 1973).

Hart's research in Accra showed that the situation was quite different there. He found that there were large groups of workers who had no fixed employer. They assembled in the city in the early morning and those who needed day labourers would come there, bargain over the wage and then employ them for short periods, some times as short as one day. He also found that in the market places, there were people who carried their agricultural produce from their homes in the villages and came to the city to sell their wares. These included food grains, vegetables, meat and poultry, fruits, herbs etc. The whole scenario was quite different from what he had seen in the developed countries. It was also quite different from the tribal economies in Africa that he had studied, where trade in commodities was done through exchange.

Hart also found that this section of labour, and micro-traders, played a significant role in the city's economy. Hence he felt that wage employment was there in the urban economy, comprising factory workers, government employees, teachers etc. Alongside this 'invisible' section also was significant for the urban economy. They encouraged rural-urban migration and provided cheap labour and cheap food. For lack of any better description he labelled this section, 'informal sector'. This was in opposite of the formal sector. Hence the term 'informal sector' was born. The ILO popularised it by using it in their employment mission in Kenya.

Hart has noted certain characteristics of the informal sector that make workers in this sector different from the formal sector. These are:

1. Low levels of skill. Workers in this sector have low levels of education and thus they have low skills. This is the reason why they are engaged in jobs involving low technology. Workers in the formal sector have higher degree of skill and their position in the labour is better.
2. Easy entry. Getting work in the informal sector is comparatively easier than in the formal sector. Hart's study shows that any able bodied person, irrespective of the skills possessed can become a day labourer. With minimum investment the same person can become a street vendor and sell her/his wares at the market. The person need not have money to invest in a shop. In this way the informal sector is able to absorb more workers who would normally not get any work because they are either not qualified or they do not have capital for investing in business.
3. Low paid employment. Because of the requirement of low skills and the easy entry, work in the informal sector has low returns. Workers who offer their labour

are not paid high wages. In fact, the biggest grievance against this sector is that the wages are many times below sustenance level. In many cases, low wages drive other members of the family into the informal work force because the main wage earned is not sufficient for sustaining a household. In this sense, children too may be encouraged to join the labour force.

4. The fourth characteristic of the informal sector, according to Hart is that it is largely composed of immigrant labour. Hart found that the informal sector worker in Ghana had come to the city from the rural areas. As mentioned earlier, workers and small traders in the city came from the rural areas in search of a livelihood. He hence included migrant status as a characteristic of the informal sector.

The four characteristics noted by Hart could be taken as the basic features of the informal sector. However, we shall see later, that these describe the informal sector of a peculiar type. This sector has increased in size as well as in variety. Hence these characteristics can no longer be the features of the informal sector in general. They could no, doubt, describe a major section of this sector, but not all sections.

The features laid down by Hart show that the informal sector is the place where people with little skills find some work. Such a situation is not ideal, especially from the developed countries point of view. The underlying belief was that as these countries advance in terms of development, the features would change. The spread of education among all sections of the population will improve skill formation and people will be equipped to get better jobs. The improvement of the economy through industrialisation will throw up new opportunities for skilled workers. Hence as the economy develops in an industrial economy, the informal sector will be gradually absorbed by the formal sector. In other words, more people will get regular jobs in large enterprises. Labourers will be absorbed in the factories and street vendors will be absorbed in the shops, departmental stores and other forms of retailing and so on. The informal sector was thus a transitory sector that would be absorbed in the formal sector.

This is far from reality. We in fact find that the informal sector has grown tremendously, and even developed countries have a growing section of workers who are in the informal sector. In cities in the USA and UK there are a large number of women who stitch clothes or do other types of tailoring activities from home or from

illegal factories. These women are paid low wages and are no different from home-based workers in the developing countries. They are in most cases immigrants from less developed countries and their husbands do not earn enough to maintain the family. These women have to work in such conditions in order to earn some extra income. Naila Kabeer has done a study of Bangladeshi women engaged in the garment industry in London and Dhaka. We shall discuss this later.

Another section of the informal sector is the street vendors. One will find a growing number of street vendors in most cities in the developed countries. These self-employed people are mainly immigrants from developing countries. They work on the streets because they are unable to get regular jobs. Street vendors can be found in almost all cities, in developed and less developed countries. One can find them in crowded market places selling a variety of less expensive goods and food. In cities like New York, London, Berlin and Paris one will come across a large number of street vendors selling food, flowers and durable goods. Most of these people are immigrants from the developing countries who have migrated in search of better life chances.

Street vendors form a very large section of the urban informal sector in developing countries. In India one estimate notes that around 2% of the total urban population is engaged in street vending (GOI 2004). In Delhi there are around 300,000 street vendors while Mumbai has 200,000 and Kolkata a little more than 200,000. The total employment provided through street vending becomes larger if we consider the fact that it sustains certain industries by marketing their products. A lot of the goods sold by street vendors, such as clothes and hosiery, leather and moulded plastic goods, household goods and some items of food, are manufactured in small scale or home-based industries. These industries engage a large number of workers but they could have hardly marketed their products on their own. In this way street vendors provide a valuable service by helping sustain employment in these industries.

The poorer sections too are able to procure their basic necessities mainly through street vendors, as the goods sold are cheap. The study on street vendors conducted by the author showed that the lower income groups spend a higher proportion of their income in making purchases from street vendors mainly because their goods are cheap and thus affordable. Had there been no street vendors in the cities the plight of

the urban poor would be worse than what it is at present. In this way one section of the urban poor, namely, street vendors, helps another section to survive. Hence though street vendors are viewed as a problem for urban governance, they are in fact the solution to some of the problems of the urban poor. By providing cheaper commodities street vendors are in effect providing subsidy to the urban poor, something that the government should have done.

#### **Reflection and Action 20.1**

Take five families in your neighbourhood. Find out how many adult members of each family are working outside home (or inside home as in case of women working for an outside agency)

Write a report of two pages on “The Organised and the Unorganised Sector of Economy” based on the findings in your neighbourhood. Discuss your report with your Academic Counsellor and other learners at your study center.

### **20.3 Dimensions of the Urban Informal Sector in India**

Workers in the informal sector do not get most of the security given to formal sector workers. Their jobs are insecure, as most of the laws do not protect them. Though in principle labour laws in India are expected to apply to all sections of industrial labour, there are in-built provisions which exclude large sections of the labour force. The most important law regulating work in industries is the Factories Act. All other laws such as Employees State Insurance Act, Workmen’s Compensation Act, Provident Fund and Family Pension Act, Payment of Gratuity Act, apply only to establishments covered by the Factories Act. This Act is applicable only to manufacturing units which employ a minimum of 10 workers and which use power in manufacturing and a minimum of 20 workers if the unit does not use power. Hence a large section of industrial workers employed in small industries do not have legal protection in their work. Similarly the Shops and Establishments Act, that grants protection in terms of regulation of work, wages and post-retirement benefits, applies to only those establishments employing more than five workers. Here again, the term ‘worker’ refers to a permanent worker and not temporary or casual worker. Hence if a shop or factory employs permanent workers that are below the minimum number and

alongside employs three times the number of casual labour, it will not come under any of the acts.

The self-employed also form a sizable group. These are workers engaged in home-based production, casual day labourers and street vendors etc. While there are estimates of the number of street vendors, there are no estimates of home-based workers as they constitute an invisible section of the workforce. India has till now not ratified the ILO convention on home-based work. One of the main features of this convention is of maintaining a live register of home-based workers. This helps to understand the numbers involved and also in providing for social security. We can thus see that the composition of the labour force in India shows wide contrasts.

The bulk of the country's labour force is engaged in the informal sector. The 1991 Census noted that the total working population in the country was 317 million, of which 290.2 million (91.5 per cent) was in the informal sector while only 26.8 million (8.5 per cent) was in the organized sector. The earnings of the workers in the two sectors differed considerably. Though the organized sector employed only 8.5 per cent of the total labour force, the workers collectively earned around 33 per cent of the country's total wages and incomes (Davala 1995). Composition of workers in the informal sector showed that an overwhelming majority was in agricultural area. There were 75 million agricultural workers and 110 million small and marginal cultivators who are also engaged as agricultural labour (Dutt 1997: 10). Therefore there were around 100 million workers in the non-farm rural sector and the urban unorganised sector.

The situation has changed since the Census of 1991. In the same year, on 21 July, the government placed before Parliament the new Industrial Policy Statement which proposed restructuring of industries. This was in tune with the policies of structural adjustment in the wake of globalisation. Though these policies led to some increase in employment, they also encouraged downsizing of large industries, out-sourcing of manufacture to small-scale industries and a decline of employment in the formal sector. A report of the Ministry of Labour, Government of India, (GOI 2004) has given the figures for 2000 based on the report of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). It carried out a sample survey (55<sup>th</sup> Round) in 1999-2000 and its results showed that out of total workforce of 397 million, only 28 million workers

are employed in the organised sector and remaining in the unorganised sector. This means that a decade after reforms were introduced employment in the formal sector has been almost stagnant or slightly declined. The *Economic Survey* for 2004-2005 (GOI 2005: 230) states that the total employment in the formal sector on 31 March 2003 was 27 million. In other words employment declined by one million since 2000. Moreover there seems to be no change in employment in terms of numbers from 1991. This means that a decade after reforms were introduced employment in the formal sector has been almost stagnant or slightly declined. The informal sector, on the other hand has grown tremendously. One of the reasons for the decline of the formal sector is closures of the public sector enterprises.

In 1993, around 70% of the workers in the formal sector are employed in government, quasi-government and public sector enterprises (Papola 1994: 34). This proportion fell by one percent in 2003. The *Economic Survey* for 2004-2005 notes that in March 2003 the public sector employed 69% of workers in the formal sector. In fact formal sector employment fell by one per cent because of a decline in public sector employment of 0.8 percent (GOI 2005: 230). The private sector provides employment to only 30% of the labour in the formal sector.

#### **20.4 Growth of Small Scale Industries**

While the formal sector shows a negative growth in employment, the small-scale manufacturing sector shows a lot of buoyancy. The annual pre-budget Economic Surveys show that small industries have been growing steadily. The 2004-2005 survey shows that this sector employs around 28 million workers and its employment is growing by over 4% per annum. The total number of workers in this sector alone is more than the employment provided by the entire formal sector. The growth of the small-scale industries is again a thrust area of the industrial policy of 1991. The policy had stated that the small-scale sector would be encouraged to play a dynamic role in growth and employment. The paid up capital for small-scale industry has been increased considerably—from Rs. 2 million to Rs. 30 million. This means that it is possible to upgrade technology and include the high technology industries in this sector. As a result, small-scale industries contribute to 35% of India's export earnings (GOI 2003). This is certainly a good sign, but it could have been appreciated even more if conditions of its labour had not remained pathetic.

The rapid growth of the small-scale industries is due to the above-mentioned policy measures and also due to the restructuring of large industries, especially in the consumer goods and pharmaceutical sectors. These industries were originally based in urban centres like Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kolkata etc. They started closing down their operations through down sizing the labour force and shifting their production to smaller towns. Labour in these areas is cheap, there are no unions and labour laws are not applied as stringently as in the urban-industrial sector. On the other hand, the government, in its bid to promote industrial development of these areas, demarcates special areas called ‘industrial development zones’ these are operated through the state’s industrial development corporation. The concerned state government usually grants an array of incentives to induce industrialists to set up their units in industrial development areas. These include, availability of land at low rent that has industrial sheds (hence saving the small entrepreneur costs of construction) and exemption of local taxes such as sales tax and excise, for a specific period of time (usually for the first five years).

Several large companies take advantage of such offers and they move production from the larger cities to these smaller centres to avail of the benefits that lead to reduction in costs. This does not necessarily mean that the consumers will benefit by getting the goods at cheaper rates. This process is similar to the type of outsourcing in production witnessed between countries of the North and the South. Just as industrial production in Europe and USA is outsourced to the less developed countries; similarly, the large-scale sector in India out-sources its production to the small-scale sector in non-urban areas, as costs are low.

## **20.5 Composition of the Informal Sector**

The above discussion shows that in most Indian cities the urban poor survive by working in the informal sector. Poverty and lack of gainful employment in the rural areas and in the smaller towns drive large numbers of people to the cities for work and livelihood. These people generally possess low skills and lack the level of education required for the better paid jobs in the formal sector. Besides, permanent protected jobs in the formal sector are shrinking hence even those having the requisite skills are unable to find proper employment. For these people work in the informal sector are the only means for their survival. For the urban poor, street vending is one of the

means of earning a livelihood, as it requires minor financial input and the skills involved are low though the income too is low. A large section of street vendors in urban areas are those with low skills and who have migrated to the larger cities from rural areas or small towns in search of employment. Other employment opportunities for the illiterate or semi-literate migrants are working in small factories or workshops having low level of technology, and hence having a greater reliance on physical labour, and casual day labourers in construction sites or other places.

There is another section of the urban population that has joined the informal sector; namely, those once engaged in the formal sector (see Bhowmik 2000, Bhowmik and More 2001 and Breman 2001). These people, or their spouses, were once engaged in better-paid jobs in the textile mills in Mumbai and Ahmedabad and engineering firms in Kolkata. Formal sector workers in these three metropolises have had to face large-scale unemployment due to closure of these industries. Many of them have become street vendors or workers in small factories in order to eke out a living. A study on street vendors, conducted in these cities, show that around 30% of the street vendors in Ahmedabad and Mumbai and 50% in Kolkata were once engaged in the formal sector (Bhowmik 2000). A study conducted by SEWA in Ahmedabad shows that around half the retrenched textile workers are now street vendors. We can hence see that the urban informal sector has a variety of occupations, though incomes are low and social security is non-existent.

The third category of workers in the informal sector is those who are employed in the formal sector. These people are engaged as temporary or casual labour in industries or establishments in the formal sector. In large factories or undertakings one can find permanent workers and also workers who are employed as temporary or casual labour. In many such organisations, there are sections where casual labour is employed. This could be in the canteen or in cleaning. In many companies the security staffs are not employees of the company. They are hired from a separate company. These people are on contract with that security company. They are hence contract workers. Therefore we have casual and contract workers working in the formal sector organisations. In many organisations we will find that contract labour and casual or temporary labour is used extensively.

The employment of such labour is because many companies do not want to increase the number of permanent workers. The reason is that if a worker becomes permanent then the employer has to make provision for provident fund, give gratuity payment at the time of retirement, provide for medical leave and facilities if the person falls ill, allow the person leave with pay for specific reasons and, in many cases, provide for pension after retirement. The most important reason is that the employer cannot remove a permanent worker from his work. In other words, the employer can hire a worker but he/she cannot fire the worker as easily. There is a long legal process involved. On the other hand, temporary and casual workers do not get any of the facilities cited above and they can be removed from their jobs at anytime. In 1993, a book containing case studies in eight industries (Davala 1993) shows that in some industries casual and contract labour form more than half the total number of workers employed in that industry.

The above discussion brings out certain aspects of the informal sector. The overwhelming majority of the work force in India (97%) lies in the informal sector. There are two aspects of this sector. Firstly, a large section of the informal sector comprises the self-employed. These include street vendors, home-based workers, mainly women, who do not always know who their employers are, rickshaw pullers, taxi and auto-rickshaw drivers etc. These form a large section of the informal sector. They are in fact a part of the informal economy.

There is another section that is found within the formal sector. Hence if we talk of the informal sector as a separate and distinct sector that is different from the formal sector then we could be talking of two distinct sectors that are separated from each other. However in this case (informal sector within the formal sector) we find that the two sectors overlap. Hence we could think of talking about informal employment in this case. This would cover employment in the small scale sector and within the formal sector. Similarly the term ‘informal economy’ captures the small traders, self-employed etc. in the informal sector. We can hence say that the informal sector comprises two parts, namely, informal economy and informal employment.

## **20.6 Case Studies of Garment Workers**

We have till now discussed the concept of the informal sector and what actually comprises this sector. In the following sections we shall try and understand the type of

work and wages in this sector. We shall do this through case studies. These studies will enable us to get a better insight into the people engaged in this sector.

The garment industry is one of the largest employers in the informal sector. With growing consumerism there is a growth in the demand for clothes. The industry caters to all income groups, namely, manufacturing clothes that will be bought by the poor and also high priced designer wear for the upper income group. Besides, there is an ever growing export market. Till 2005 India faced restrictions on exports as important buying countries like the USA and European countries had imposed a quota on Indian export of clothes. After India joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO), these restriction were phased out. By January 2005, all restrictions on import of 'multi-fibre' garments by these countries were removed. This has given India a much better opportunity to increase garment exports. Hence the export market too is an important component of the garment industry.

There are two types of informal workers in this industry. Firstly those who stitch clothes in small factories and secondly, those who stitch clothes from home. Home-based workers out number the factory workers. We can take a brief look at the processes involved in garment making.

The home-based workers are exclusively women. They work for contractors who give them work and pay them at piece rates. In other words, the contractor will give the women the cloth for making the clothes and will pay them according to the number of garments stitched. In most cases the women have to pay for the thread. The payment is low, sometimes they make between Rs. 20 to Rs. 50 a day. If the cost of thread increases, their income decreases or they have to stitch more clothes to make up the loss in income. The founder of SEWA, Ela Bhatt, notes in her memoirs (Bhatt 2006: 59-80) that in 1988 the rate for stitching one petticoat was Rs. 2 in Ahmedabad. Bhatt has shown the way these women (mostly poor, belonging to Muslim communities) were exploited by the contractors and the buyers of the clothes.

### **Reflection and Action 20.2**

Visit your local library or study centre library. Find out a book or article describing the plight of the migrant labour which comes from different regions of India to the city in search of employment. Write an essay in about two pages on the "Migrant

Labour and the Informed Sector" in your city/town/town next to your village. Share your essay with other students at your study center.

Stitching has to be done by sewing machines. These are usually operated by hand or foot. However, if the pace has to increase then electric machines are needed. The women own the implements of production. These are the sewing machines, thread, needles and any other implement. If the woman wants to increase production by improving her implements she should have the resources to do so. Hence, if a woman would like to use an electric sewing machine, she would have to buy it from her own resources. Moreover, the additional cost of electricity was borne by her. Bhatt has shown that the women are so poor that any increase in costs of implements means greater indebtedness. In fact she found that most of the women could not even own manually operated sewing machines. They used to take them on rent.

The type of clothes made by these home-based workers is of low quality and cheap. These are mostly bought by the poor. Hence, Bhatt notes that it is these poor garment stitchers who provide clothes for the poor in the city. Bhatt's work on these women is certainly worth reading.

The other types of workers in this industry are those involved in small factories. These workers are different from the home-based workers. They do not work from home but they work in small factories. The owner provides them with the machines and other implements. One can find such factories in industrial estates in Mumbai, Delhi and most other large cities. The owners usually produce these garments for a large buyer. The clothes manufactured are of superior quality that are either exported or are sold in large retail outlets.

Naila Kabeer, a Bangladeshi researcher from Sussex University, has made an insightful study on women garment workers in Dhaka (Bangladesh) and London (Kabeer 2000). There are around 20 million women engaged in the garment industry. These women work in factories that have modern machines for cutting and stitching fabrics. The women work on electric sewing machines, stitching garments that are exported to the developed countries. They work for eight hours and they are paid wages that are a combination of piece and time. Each worker is given a certain number of garments to stitch. They have to complete the task within the stipulated

time and they are paid wages accordingly. If they work less their wages are deducted. In case they work more than the quota they get some extra money.

The women are from poor households. The wages they are paid are low compared to the long hours they put in. Most of them have low education. Kabeer finds that around 37% of the women have passed primary school, but very few have had studied further. In fact this was the reason why there were no supervisors from the women. Lack of education and poverty has kept them backward. Moreover, Kabeer mentions, women in South Asian countries are hesitant to work outside the household. In the case of Bangladesh, the purdah system that Muslim women are expected to adhere tends to restrict their mobility and binds them to their homes. Kabeer, however, argues that for these poor women, working outside the home is vital for their survival and the survival of their family. The factories have only women workers and they are protected by walls. This makes it possible for the women to work there.

For the impoverished women, working in the factory gives them autonomy in their lives. This has several implications. Kabeer finds that after having an independent income, some of the husbands have stopped beating their wives. The women in turn use this extra money for educating their children or for improving conditions at home. An interesting finding of Kabeer's study is that many of the women invest their money on their daughter's education. This is one of the positive fallouts of working independently because, as in all South Asian countries, in Bangladesh too, the girl child is treated as inferior to the son.

Despite the positive aspects of women and work in the informal sector one cannot overlook its obvious exploitative aspects. There are different tasks in the garment industry, besides stitching clothes. This includes stitching collars to the shirts, sewing buttons on them, checking the quality of the clothes and, ironing them. Stitching of collars and buttons are done by home based working women. Checking for faults and ironing are done in the factory by women. These tasks involve standing for long hours at a stretch and also bending. This has bad effects on the body and the women develop different types of pains and ailments. The wages too are very low but the women accept these conditions because despite low pay because even this meagre salary gives them some autonomy in their homes.

## 20.7 Conclusion

In the above sections we have tried to explore the various aspects of the informal sector. We started with how this sector came to be recognised and the initial definition by Keith Hart. We also found that this definition had its limitation because the informal sector has shown many more dimensions. The important feature of all writers and planners on the informal sector was that they viewed it as a transitory sector. It would sooner or later be absorbed in the formal sector. The present situation shows that this did not happen. On the contrary this sector has grown tremendously. In fact we find that the new sources of employment are only in the informal sector.

The urban informal sector comprises those low skill entrants who migrate from rural areas and they work in low skilled, low paid jobs in order to survive. In moving from their insecure, poverty ridden life in the village to the city where they are able to get work, but with low wages, they move from one level of poverty to another level of poverty. The other type of workers is those who had held secure better paid jobs but they were retrenched when their organisations closed down. This is the fate of most workers in the larger industries, such as cotton textiles, pharmaceuticals, chemical etc. In most cities we find that the larger industries have closed down leaving hundreds of workers unemployed. These people seek employment in the informal sector. Hence in this case we find that there is a shift from the better paid, secure jobs in the formal sector to the lower paid, insecure jobs in the informal sector. The third type is the self-employed. These include street vendors, home based workers and the casual labourers. Finally, we should also mention about another type, namely, casual and contract workers engaged in the formal sector.

We can therefore see that the informal sector is not only very vast in number but also very varied. It is also a very important part of our economy because if this sector provides cheap goods and labour and their inputs in effect make life easier for the affluent and the middle class in the cities. The urban informal sector is quite a major part of our everyday lives and it is growing every day.

## 20.8 Further Reading

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## **Unit 21**

# **Changing Occupational Structure and Impact of Economic Liberalization**

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- 21.2      New Indian Economy
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- 21.7      Further Reading

### **Learning Objectives**

After reading this unit you should be able to:

- explain the changes taking place in post liberalization period of Indian economy
- describe the urban scenario in terms of the changes in occupational structure
- outline the rural scenario in terms of the changes in occupational structure, and finally
- describe some of the new trends in the occupational structure

### **21.1    Introduction**

Consider a few things ‘Equity research opportunity for CA’s and MBAs’, ‘Tele-Marketing Executives’, ‘Required a Technical Writer’, ‘Needed a Compliance Executive’, ‘Wanted a Customer Care Executive’. These are a few types of job opportunities published every day in newspapers on all days of the week.

‘Every Sunday in newspapers, one finds matrimonial advertisements classified according to occupational categories or in the profiles of bride or groom, job profile is mentioned or highlighted’.

‘Everyday morning one crosses any junction (where two or more roads meet) in any city or town; or passes through any size of market place one comes across hordes of people assembled with basic equipments such as spades or bamboo baskets or sickles. At first look this seems like

a fair or mela, but if one spends even half an hour, one realizes that these are ‘labour Haats’. Where labour contractors come and hire them for carrying out any kind of sundry jobs’.

How do we describe such instances, does this mean that are we witnessing new kind of occupational structures in new economy? Or has the new economy of India shifted its base from old traditional economy from rural areas to new type of economy which is more urban centric? A closer look at these instances reveals that there are many different issues intertwined and for clearer understanding we need to highlight these issues-

Is there a shift in Indian economy from farm based to non-farm economy?

Does Indian economy has same contribution from the rural areas or is that the urban areas have a bigger contribution to make than the rural areas?

As a corollary, have the above factors led to change in the rural and urban occupational structure?

Finally in the light of new occupations have perceptions of people changed with regard to old occupations.

In the following pages, we will discuss the above issues to understand new emerging occupational structures in new economy.

## **21.2 New Indian Economy**

Since mid-1991, in India wide range of economic reforms were carried out with the aim to liberalize and globalize the economy. Under this both internal and international economic activity were de-regulated and liberalized. Internal liberalization included the dismantling of a complex industrial licensing system, opening up to private investors a number of sectors previously reserved for the state, some divestment of stock in the public sector, decontrol of administered prices, and financial liberalization. External liberalization measure included removal of non-tariff barriers to imports, reduction in import tariffs, incentive for foreign direct investment and technology inflows, allowing Indian firms to borrow from abroad, and the opening up of Indian stock markets to foreign investors. These policy changes evoked a variety of responses, some based on a priori theoretical expectations and others citing the trickle of empirical evidence. Reform minded scholars view globalization as not only quickening growth but also promoting mass well-being. They argue foreign competition and foreign direct

investment will improve allocative and productive efficiency. For them trade liberalization increases the demand for semi-skilled and unskilled workers, increase their wages, and thereby reduce poverty and improve income distribution.

Employment and wages are the major potential channels through which the social impact of increased openness and globalization are felt. One way of measuring total employment in India is to use available figures for the workforce and applying officially available unemployment figures from the formal sector and assuming that there is no open unemployment in the informal sector. Following this approach it appears that while in the 1980s employment generally grew at a rate below population growth, in the 1990s, employment growth was somewhat higher, though much of the increase occurred in 1997.

The sectoral distribution of the workforce also reveals some surprises. The share of agriculture and allied sectors in total employment declined sharply from 63.9% in 1993-94 to 59.8% in 1999-2000 with absolute employment declining for the first time since independence. This trend out of agriculture, which had been observed during the 1980s also, had been stalled between 1987-88 and 1993-94, mostly during early years of the reforms. Employment in manufacturing has risen only slightly from 10.7% of the workforce in 1993-94 to 11.1% in 1999-2000 with practically all of the rise concentration in urban areas. The biggest gains in workforce occurred in construction and in trade, hotels and restaurants, the compound rate of growth in both sectors exceeding 6% per annum. The latter sector now rivals manufacturing in the size of the labour force it employs.

An analysis of the unemployment reveals that for both rural men and women in the labour force, the rate of unemployment rose sharply. Urban male unemployment rose a little while urban unemployment actually fell. Overall, then, the unemployment situation has worsened during the 1990s especially in rural areas. There has also been rising casualization of the workforce in the aftermath of reforms and a decline in the share of self-employment. The share of casual labour in employment rose from 31.2% in 1988 to 37% in 1998. While growing casualization is certainly in keeping with services accounting for the major share of the

workforce increments, even in the sectors of regular employment, retrenchment, closures and lockouts have risen.

In the following section below we will discuss the occupational structure from the point of view of work participation rate (WPR) in early and late reform period. The basis of analysis is data collected during National Family and Health Survey (NFHS)1 and 2. While the NFHS 1 is referred as Early Reform Period as it was conducted in 1992-93 the NFHS 2 is referred as Late Reform Period as it was carried out during 1998-99.

### 21.3 The Urban Scenario

#### **Box 21.1 The Work Participation Ratio**

The Work Participation Ratio (WPR) is defined as the percentage of male and female workers to the corresponding population.

The preliminary analysis shows that the work participation rate (WPR) had declined during the period. The largest decline in WPR is observed in the age group of 45 and above. On the other hand the female work participation rate had increased in prime working age group in urban India. It is found that the mostly practiced employment in urban India is skilled manual which is equally high irrespective of city size. It is 11.2 percent in capital/ large cities, 14 percent in small cities and 12.7 percent in towns. The second most practiced employment is merchants, shopkeepers, wholesale and retail trade which is almost of similar proportion in all the places. The proportion of clerical and related workers are higher in large cities as compared to smaller cities of India. The skilled manual constitutes 10.3 percent of the workforce followed by unskilled workers and labourers. Among other main occupations, 6.5 percent are in administrative, executive and managerial and 2.1 percent are medical professionals. The architect and engineer constitute about 1.3 percent of total working population while that of agriculture and allied activities are less than 1 percent in metropolis of India.

However, the occupational differential by sex, caste and religion is quite distinct. In large cities of India the widely practiced employment among females is domestic workers followed by clerical and related workers. Moreover the work participation among females is more among household belonging to low standard of living. There is differential in occupational pattern by

caste and religion. A large proportion of working population among Schedule Tribe are engaged in low paid jobs as compared to others. On the other hand, it is found that in particular profession like skilled manual merchants, shopkeepers and trade the proportions of Muslims are higher as compared to Hindus irrespective of type of urban locality while the reverse is true in case of administrative, executive, managerial, teachers and clerical and related jobs.

From the analysis it revealed that there is decline in WPR among elder age group (45 and above) in late reform period irrespective of type of urban locality i.e., capital/large city, small city or towns and sex. However the same is not true for younger age group. The differential in WPR by type of urban localities showed that while it has marginally declined/ remained constant in large /capital cities the overall WPR had notices small increase in small cities and town. The female WPR has increased in both ERP and LRP but it is more among illiterate and less educated women. The similar differential is observed with respect to standard of living index of the households. About two fifth of labour force in Urban India are engaged in low paid jobs as compared to less than 10 percent in high paid job. However the proportion of labour force engaged in low paid job is relatively lower in large/capital cities as compared to small cities and towns. Further the sex differential in employment by type of urban localities showed that a higher proportion of working women in metropolis are domestic workers. The most practiced employment among females are skilled manual followed by teachers. The differential in occupational pattern by caste group showed that there is substantial variation in employment by caste group. While a larger proportion of ST and SCs are engaged in low paid jobs as compared to others. Similarly the religion differential in occupation pattern is found in Urban India.

## **21.4 The Rural Scenario**

An analysis of data from National Sample Survey's 55<sup>th</sup> round for 1999-2000 reveals that there is marked shift in the structure of employment in India. The shift away from agriculture is fairly dramatic. Broadly these shifts can be divided in three categories-

- a) decline in the workforce engaged in crop production is higher than in the agriculture as a whole;
- b) increase in employment based on livestock is high and

c) forestry is not absorbing a large share of workforce.

If we closely analyse, it becomes apparent that since mid 70's there has been diversification in the demand for agro-based commodities. In other words, the pattern has been that the growth in demand for food grains has been around 2.5 percent per annum, while the demand for commercial crops has grown at around 5 percent per annum and that of plantation crops like tea and coffee and non-land based agricultural products like fish has grown at around 7 percent per annum (Alagh 2005). In the decade of 80's only scholars like Alagh (1986) had pointed out that a switch away from agriculture has started in the labour force, which was more pronounced in some regions. Similarly, Bhalla (1983) has shown that the 1970s saw the first fall in the share of agricultural workers in the labour force. Further, this shift, she pointed out, brings the direction of the trend in the employment structure in line with output structures, which may have positive results. And recently Gupta (2003) highlighted that till 1983 there were 12 states where Rural Non-Farm Employment was below 20%, which left only 5 states where Rural Non-Farm Employment was more than 20%. However, in 1999-2000 the situation has inversed i.e., now 12 states have Rural Non-Farm Employment above 20% and only 5 are below that figure.

Above scenario of employment in terms of Non-Farm Employment (NFE) can be viewed both as cause or effect of some other causes. Nonetheless NFE has certain features which are very significant for understanding the causal relationship. First one to be noted is 'sectoral diversification'. NSS data suggest a process of sectoral diversification in rural areas. There has been an increase in the non-farm sector's share in employment (principal and subsidiary status) during 1973-99. This has been maintained during 1993-99 as well. However, the process of sectoral diversification seems to have occurred only among the male workers during entire period. This shift has not taken place in case of female workers during the same period. Further much of the increase in the share of NFE for males has been contributed to the tertiary sector, while manufacturing sector has almost stagnated during the same period. As far as NFE for females are concerned, there has not been any major shift across sectors over the past decades.

In post-liberalization period, it seems an anomaly to view India as an overwhelmingly agrarian society. The reasons are- contribution on agriculture in Rural Net Domestic Product is down

from 72.4% in 1970-71 to 54.4% in 2002-2003 (Chadha 2003); according to national sample survey (NSS) in 1993-94 the number of rural people working in urban area was double than that of 1987-88 and since 1980 there has been noticed a declining trend in GDP growth of agriculture i.e. 3.5% in 1980 to 2.8% in 1990's. This went further down to 1.3% in 1999-2000 to negative growth of -2% in 2000-01 (Majumdar 2002).

What are the reasons for growing NFE? As mentioned above the scope for employment in agriculture has fallen, however the growth in agricultural production creates many types of post-harvesting activities that relate to trade where high degree of non-farm employment takes place. Further this also hints at refocusing of 'aspirations' of rural poor. There are a group of scholars who view NFE as an instance of 'distress employment'. They argue that NFE has increased at the time when agricultural growth has been stagnant. This means that unemployed take up any type of job that come their way. The counter argument is that NFE is also dependent upon availability of off-farm employment. Further, even though the migrants from villages employed in NFE work for less, still that wage is higher than agricultural wage.

## **21.5 Some Trends**

In this section we will discuss, the apparent trends in occupation, which will highlight the structural features in the new economy. An analysis of 4 villages (2 in north India and 2 in east India) by Gupta (2003) reveals that for non-farm employment the distress theory does not hold ground in north India. That is, even well-off farmers belonging to Jatt caste are engaged in NFE along with SC of the village. Even the range of occupation such as dairy farming, sweet shop, transportation, cable TV operation, beauty parlor and Gymnasium are owned and run by people belonging to people without much consideration of caste status. Though, the famous argument is the enterprising nature of people belonging to Punjab. However, in eastern India even in NFE there caste status does come into play. So Thakurs or Tayagi's are not involved in 'Stud farming' or in 'brick klin'. In all such occupations, it is people mainly belonging to the schedule castes or lower in caste hierarchy are included. Upper caste people are mainly involved in NFE, which are salaried or in transportation.

An important dimension of sectoral diversification and resultant NFE in recent years is the process of casualisation of workforce. The percentage of casual male workers was noted to have gone up from the quinquennial data both in rural and urban areas during 1977-93 (Kundu 1997). A similar increase but of a smaller magnitude, has been observed in case of females. Interestingly, the figures have gone up in rural areas even after 1993-94, both for males and females. The increase in the regular/salaried workers as a percentage of the total number of (usual status) workers seems to be special phenomena for urban females. This has to be interpreted cautiously. It has been noted that in many of the sub-categories of regular workers where female employment has gone up, the jobs are of an informal nature and have a very low wage rate.

The above mentioned fact - ‘Everyday morning one crosses any junction (where two or more roads meets) in any city or town; or passes through any size of market place one comes across hordes of people assembled with basic equipments such as spades or bamboo baskets or sickles. At first look this seems like a fair or *mela*, but if one spends even half an hour, one realizes that these are ‘labour Haats’. Where labour contractors come and hire them for carrying out any kind of sundry jobs’, can be observed at any city, town or urban conglomeration. For instance in Delhi such places are Munirka, Kotla Mubarkpur, Neb Sarai and Khanpur. At all these places if one spends an hour or two one realizes that most of the workers present there are from nearby rural areas. This one can judge from their clothing and language in which they speak. The author of this unit, in the course of collecting information for this paper had the opportunity to interact with a few workers. Given below is the summary of their discussion in Box 21.2.

#### **Box 21.2 interaction with Daily Wagers**

My name is Ramesh. I belong to a village called ‘Bhowapur’ in Ghaziabad district. I am married and have two kids. At my village home I have three brothers and parents. My father is farmer, who owns 3 acres of land. All my brothers and parents are engaged in agriculture. I was also engaged in agriculture till last year. But as we grew up, we realized that income from family is not sufficient to meet the needs of the family. Thereupon I decided to come to Delhi to search for jobs to support the family. Since then every day I came to work in this city. Earlier I was not sure that what kind of job I will get. But now I am confident of carrying out any kind

of job. My routine is that everyday morning wife prepares some lunch and packs in the tiffin box. I start from my home in my village at 6 o'clock in the morning. Once I reach Delhi, based upon chance of getting work, I decide to go that 'labour market'. Though Now I know a few contractors, but one is not lucky everyday. Hence if I don't get work in one market, I have to rush to another market. Every day morning before I start the journey, I pray to god that when I go back home in the evening, I should at least have Rs 100 for the family. About work I have done all kinds of work over the last year. I have been helper to mason, painter and caterer. I have also worked as casual labour for lawn mowing, digging pits for laying cable. Now I can say that I know almost all kinds of work. However, now I realize that I am not called master of trade. I am only a helper. Though, when I was in village, being the elder son of my father, I used to take all decision for agriculture. And many of my neighbours and relatives used to call me 'farmer'. They sought my advise on farming. Now I earn a bit more, but no one seeks my advice.

### **Reflection and Action 21.1**

After reading the Box 21.2 on Interaction with Daily wagers; you plan a minor study of wage labourers in your area. If you live in a city /town you may interview people who arrive from the surrounding villages in search of employment. But if you stay in a village you may find out how many men and women commute daily to the city for jobs.

Write a report of two pages on "Rural-urban Employment Scenario." Compare your report with those of others at your study center.

A careful reading of Ramesh's account reveals that along with casualisation of rural workers, there is a continuous process of breakdown of skill. So a worker who is a farmer or blacksmith or carpenter in rural areas is reduced to a daily wage labourer in urban areas. One is not sure but whether this the result of reduced capacity of agriculture to observe workers or ambition among workers for better life because of better wages in urban areas. This breakdown of traditional skills, has in a way made livelihood of these workers very uncertain, because in the new setup erstwhile skilled but now 'casual' workers don't get work because of their skill but upon chance. The narrative of Ramesh also highlights the fact that in almost all cities there is a

huge chunk of workers who daily migrate to city to work and in the evening they go back to their villages. This in a way has made their identity fluid. That is they are neither villagers nor urbanite, not skilled but casual.

Matrimonial columns are not only useful in finding suitable match for the prospective bride or groom, but also a significant indicator of changing perception of people vis-à-vis changing nature of occupation at least for urban areas. As indicated above that every Sunday in newspapers, one finds matrimonial advertisements classified according to occupational categories or in the profiles of bride or groom, job profile is mentioned or highlighted. Such classified columns in the newspaper highlights the emergence of new occupations. For example in pre-1990s days a doctor or engineer was considered good enough match for prospective bride or groom. But now professionals of so-called ‘knowledge economy’ are preferred over the traditional ones. Similarly, from such columns in newspaper only one comes to know about the category of people who are known as ‘development professional’. If such people are employed in ‘international donor organisation’, they are much in demand than the traditional ones.

### **Reflection and Action 21.2**

Carefully study about two day’s matrimonial advertisements in the local News paper. List the types of brides and grooms advertised for in terms of their occupations, such as, doctors, engineers, etc.

Write a report on “The New Occupational Structure as Reflected in Matrimonial Advertisements” in about one page. Compare your report with those of others in your study center.

In the new economy, as expected, employment growth takes place not only because there is more competition in the market or there are new players in the market. But also because several new sectors come up and scope of any particular sector is also redefined. This in turn gives rise to new kind of occupations. For example, in pre-liberalisation days how many of us were aware about ‘Business Process Outsourcing (BPOs) or Retail or Medical Transcription? Not many of us. However now such terminologies are used in common parlance and people involved in such occupations are many. A careful analysis reveals that the term and the sector of economy called

the service sector have been redefined. Traditionally in this sector was included hotel industry, travel and tourism and catering. At present this sector includes all the Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPOs), BPOs, telemarketing, medical tourism, adventure tourism, social auditing and event management. These all new entrants in the service sector have created new kind of occupations which our parents have never heard of. Again the course of collecting material for this paper, I came across a professional who was a social auditor. Below is the summary of discussion in Box 21.4.

#### **Box 21.4 Service Sector Employment**

I am Simon jr. I work for (Multinational Company) MNC, which has a sourcing office in India. This company sources lot of goods from India for its stores across the globe. Given the primitive stage of production processes and tradition of unfair labor practices in India, this company has a number of ‘Social Compliance Auditors’. I am one among those auditors. My task is to go around factories which produces goods for this company and make sure that they fulfill all legal requirements. In this I not only check the physical working condition in the factory, but also issues related to environment (air, water and noise), safety of workers, wage and benefit. I have to make sure that goods produced in all such factories are not only good in quality but also produced in good condition without compromising the ‘best interest of workers’ and environment.

If you ask me about education, I am a graduate in humanities. Thereafter I have completed a diploma in Human Resource Management. But none of the things I learnt while studying is of any use in the present job. The skill of social auditing I have learnt on Job and therein I had gone for one week training in ISO-9000. Given the fact that this is a new kind of occupation, till a few years back there was hardly any institute or organization which was providing any course or training. But lately I have come to know of one organization, which trains people as social auditor, but then it is hugely expensive. So those who are employed can be part of the training through company sponsorship.

The account reveals that as mentioned above new sector in the economy is giving rise to new types of occupations. Such occupations have new set of skill requirement. As Simon’s account reveals that for such skills there are hardly any courses or institutes available. What is

happening is that people from traditional stream of education are taking up these occupations. And the skill set they learn on job. Further the interesting part is that these new occupations are dismantling the educational barriers. That is earlier a law graduate has only options of joining or becoming a lawyer. But now the same law graduate can be part of a social compliance team or KPOs. So in a way the unidimensional association of education to occupations are gradually getting blurred. This however, has in no way reduced the importance or vice like grip of traditional occupations such as bureaucracy in the hinterland of the country. The reason for this is the ‘so-called’ power and status associated with such occupations. Also the new emerging economy is largely concentrated in large urban centres, which is spreading to the towns very slowly.

Any discussion of new occupational structure in new economy is incomplete at least in India if there is no discussion of occupations emerging because of rise of the knowledge sector. By Knowledge sector is mainly meant ‘information technology’ (IT) and ‘Information technology enabled services’ (ITES). By any rough estimate this sector contributes around 20% (approx. 28 billion USD) of India’s total export (around 150 billion USD) and employs around 2 million people. It is estimated that by 2010 this figure will reach 70 billion USD out of 300 billion USD for IT & ITES contribution and total export of India respectively. Further, by any conservative estimate annually 75000 professionals go to US. 90% out of the 75000 professional are IT professionals. Not much information is available about the number of professionals going to other countries. However, what we have information about is that annual remittance is around 22 billion USD in India. Even if out of 22 billion USD only 50% is contributed by the professionals of this sector, the figures become very impressive.

As far as occupations emerging out of this sector is concerned, we have mentioned in the beginning of this chapter that if one scans the job opportunities published in any newspaper, most of the jobs are related to either IT or ITES. This has also changed the hierarchy of disciplines in science, arts or in engineering. Moreover, this has also opened the new opportunity for the people not taking science or engineering stream in the graduation stage. Rather it has in a way reduced the dependency of the people on the govt. jobs. The author had an opportunity to interact with a professional of a software company, who was not exactly involved in programming. Given below is his account in his own word in Box 21.5.

### **Box 21.5 Personal Account of a Software Company Professional**

Passing out of college in the 1990s was no fun, especially if you had a poor BA. Passing out of college in the steel town of Rourkela was even less fun because the town was geared towards Engineering and Medical students and had no place or idea about what an Arts degree could do for someone. Still my heart beckoned for literature, so in spite of fierce criticism and prompts by neighbours to do a course in data entry, I left for Hyderabad to do an MA in English literature in 1994. My belief was that if it is an MA I want to do then let me do it from the best possible place -- University of Hyderabad. After the MA the old questions came up again and still I was as clueless about what to do in life as I was when I had joined the masters programme. I wasn't good enough to pass the UGC NET, or to apply for the minuscule openings for college teachers, school teaching didn't pay much, I was not inclined to spend more of my parents money on attempts to clear the UPSC, and couldn't see myself crunching numbers in some bank job. The choice was between becoming a peon and a journalist. It was a no brainer. In 1997 I chose journalism and I chose Bangalore.

The job at The Economic Times was good (1997-1999). I learnt a lot, especially about how to manage my time and resources and how not to buckle under pressure. Yet, the pay was bad. Actually the pay was fine by other standards: other news papers, other jobs like selling or managing shops. Yet, this wasn't a pay on which one could survive long enough especially when one needs to earn more and take care of his own life, spouse, parents, and so on. The other problem, and a larger one, was that I was disappointed with journalism. When we are younger we dream of changing the world and look for avenues where we can spend our might to achieve our dreams. Journalism seems like an ideal place for it is supposed to be the watchdog of society. However, I realised that the watchdog was often drugged and I had to look the other way while the world carried out its underhand activities. The realisation that I had to remain subservient to the powers and still put up a face of justice to the needy pushed me to change my mind. In that period I remembered something small I had done while I was an MA student. I had helped computer science students write their reports and had realised that, in general, the language skills of the science students are in need of help. At the same time the

Information Technology industry was growing in Bangalore and there were faint voices about the need for Technical Writers. I decided to apply.

I found a place with Novell Software as they were willing to take on experienced people who were freshers to the field. Novell wanted the joiners to have the experience of working in the corporate sector, though not necessarily as technical writers. In fact, they were prepared to show me the ropes. I learnt well and went on to finish five and a half years at Novell. In these years I moved from being a rookie technical writer to managing and leading the team of technical writers at the Bangalore centre. The job involves learning:

- What makes for a good technical writer: understanding of customers
- How to organise information
- How to use the tools to create the information
- How to manage the inputs provided by engineers and support staff
- How to plan and execute work on time
- How to keep internal and external customers satisfied
- Hiring and mentoring new writers
- Evangelising the role within companies and outside

The best part is that I do not have an ethical problem with the work. My work benefits customers and I sleep an honest sleep every night. Novell was a networking company, after leaving Novell I took a six month break to travel around the country. It was not hard to do that because I knew I would still be in demand when I came back. Now I work for Oracle Pharmaceuticals Applications which is where we make software for testing of drugs.

As mentioned above the account of the professional, corroborates the findings. Further it has blurred the disciplinary distinction vis-à-vis job market. So, one can find an MBBS being involved in the software programming and an MBA being the CEO of a big hospital.

The other new types of occupations are the ones which are hybrid in nature such as Biotechnology, Bio-chemistry, Environmental engineering, population geography and others.

These will fields are certainly giving rise to new type of occupations. Associated with this is the phases in which particular occupation and related study is at the forefront. For example, in later part of 90s we had everybody going for software, then came era of MBA and finally now people are saying it is now Genome technology.

## **21.6 Conclusion**

In this unit you learnt about the changing occupational structure in the new economy in post liberalization period, that is, since the mid 1991. You learnt that in India wide range of economic reforms were carried out with the aim of liberalizing and globalizing the economy. Amongst all the other changes, the changes in employment and wages are the major potential channels through which the social impact of increased openness and globalization are felt.

You read about the rate of unemployment of both rural men and women and urban men and women. The analysis of the unemployment reveals that for both rural men and women in the labour force, the rate of unemployment has risen sharply. Urban male unemployment has risen sharply. Urban male unemployment also ride a little but urban unemployment in total actually fell. There has been rising casualization of the workforce which has been explained through case studies. An analysis of NSS data, 55<sup>th</sup> round for 1999-2000 reveals that there is marked shift in the structure of employment in India. The shift is away from agriculture.

## **21.7 Further Reading**

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## **Unit 22**

### **Poverty**

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#### **Learning Objectives**

A study of this unit on “poverty” will enable you to

- define the concept of poverty
- describe the socio-historical analysis of poverty studies
- provide a theoretical framework within which poverty studies may be placed
- discuss the nature of urban poverty in general
- explain the nature of urban poverty in India
- discuss the process of globalization in the context of urban poverty, and family
- describe briefly the changing policy perspective on poverty.

#### **22.1 Introduction**

This study presents a sociological analysis of poverty, specifically focusing on urban poverty the theoretical framework emphasises the main approaches, which define poverty—the cultural perspective and the situational perspective. The study not only tries to understand simply the human reality of what it means to be poor, but also the central paradox of modern India, half a century of democracy, economic growth and constitutional commitment to social justice has not lessened the acute, mass poverty of the country. The first section tries to examine the socio-historical analysis of poverty

studies and research of poverty in India. The early studies of poverty in Britain and also in US focus largely on urban poverty. On the other hand in India much of the research on poverty in the period since independence was driven in by the concern for growth and development. Income and expenditure were considered to be better measures of poverty which relied on data provided by National Sample Survey (NSS). But several issues pertaining to urban poverty in India still lie unanswered. Therefore this study tries to expand its framework beyond the analysis of calorie consumption and include dimensions of well being other than nutritional intake like housing, health, education, impact of globalization, access to basic amenities etc. and it also tries to analyze the level of facilities across different regions. This unit also undertakes a systematic study of globalization and poverty as well as the changing policy perspective on poverty. The recent focus on poverty has shown that in individual countries poverty is caused by

- (i) Paucity of resources or by failure of economic development
- (ii) Failure of state
- (iii) Transition from state control economy to market based economy.

This paper attempts to first define poverty, identify poor geographical area and tries to carry out systematic investigation with an open mind to understand the phenomena of poverty and adjudge the strategies employed to combat it, which will help building a new theoretical perspective.

## **22.2 Poverty: A Definition**

It's a multidimensional phenomenon and caused by a variety of factors. Its manifestation also differs from context to context. There is no linear chain of cause and effect. It is an inter-related wave of economic, social, psychological, cultural and political factor which influence the occurrence and persistence of poverty. Real poverty may not be apparent and apparent poverty may not be real. Thus there cannot be a single strategy to eradicate it in different societal context.

At the conceptual level, poverty includes market based consumption (or income) as well as public provision of goods and services, access to common property resources and the intangible dimensions of good life. Such as clean air, dignity, autonomy and low levels of disease and crime. The proponents of the conventional approach argue that the

income and consumption measure is still the best single proxy for poverty since it can incorporate non market goods and services and wide range of other utility (clean air, democracy) and disutility (noise pollution) through “shadow prices” into a monetary equivalent that is easy to compare over time and across context. Their critics argued that common property resources and states provided commodities have usually been ignored in practice and consumption of non-traded goods has been underestimated. It is also questionable whether “Shadow prices” can meaningfully translate the different kinds of values that are embodied in non-market goods and services into monetary equivalents that are comparable. The poverty assessments (PAs) are country studies about poverty carried out by the World Bank as part of the new poverty agenda. By 1996 almost 50 PAs had been carried out, for some countries there is more than one assessment. There is also a little consistency in how the poverty line is established, even for the same country. Some of the P.As define the poverty line in absolute terms, some deflate household expenditure by average household size while others use expenditure per adult equivalent, such methodological inconsistency effectively defeats the purpose of collecting quantitative data, since one of the rationales for using quantitative data is precisely that they are comparable over time and across context.

### **22.3 Socio- historical Analysis of Poverty Studies**

Poverty studies go back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Britain where they were closely associated with the beginnings of empirical sociology. The two great pioneers of poverty studies in Britain, Charles Booth(1840-1916) and Seebohm Rowntree (1871-1954), were both men of wealth who were guided by philanthropic motives. Their work did not enter the mainstream of sociological theory but influenced both directly and indirectly the development of the welfare state. The tradition of survey research initiated by Booth and Rowntree influenced later sociological enquiries, including the monumental work on poverty by Peter Townsend in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Rowntree's book *Poverty: A study of town life* (1901) was based on investigation in York. For Rowntree, poverty was a condition in which earnings were insufficient to meet the minimum requirements of a healthy and productive life. Nutritional data made up the core of his index to which were added data relating to clothing, fuel and other household

sundries in addition to rent. Rowntree(1941) published a second study 40 years after the first. He came to feel that a single, invariant and unchanging definition of poverty would not do justice to the social reality, which varied across space and changed over time. He may be said to have laid the groundwork for the ‘relative’ and ‘absolute’ conception of poverty. American studies of poverty have also concentrated on the city, and in recent decades more particularly on what is called the ‘inner city’. The distinctive feature of poverty studies, particularly by sociologist, in the US is the attention given by them to the problem of race. Poverty in urban America is highly concentrated among the blacks and other racial minorities. At the same time, there are poor whites as well as a black middle class. The sociologist William J Wilson (1987), himself a black has drawn attention to what he calls ‘the truly disadvantaged’. These in his view should be defined not so much in terms of race as in terms of a combination of economics, demographic and social characteristics such as joblessness, broken families, teenage pregnancy, out –of –wedlock births and violent crimes. The American anthropologist Oscar Lewis (1964), who worked in India and Mexico and among the Puerto Ricans in the US, popularizes the concept of ‘The culture of poverty’. His work has failed to stand the test of time. It has been criticized for being superficial, impressionist and subjective, and for diverting attention away from the roots of poverty in the economic structure of society.

## **22.4 Poverty: Theoretical Framework**

Sociologists, have not typically viewed the question of poverty and the poor solely in terms of income. While in the past several years sociologists such as Peter Townsend,S.M.Miller and Martin Rein have been drawn to the question of the poverty line. Sociologist have taken the determination of poverty as their point of embarkation. What the precise income level is in the determination of poverty has not been the question so much as is the matter of the effect of that determination. Most sociologist have viewed poverty within the framework of social problems and have concerned themselves with the causes and effects of poverty, primarily by studying those who have been designated as poor. Others have argued that the sociologist study of poverty and the poor must also encompass the study of those who make the determination of poverty. The fact that the criteria used in the determination of poverty are not uniformly agreed upon

by economist and moreover until recently, rarely been of major concern to sociologists presents us with a number of important problems in examining sociological perspective of poverty. One serious problem is that it is very often difficult to ascertain whether sociologists are referring to the same population. Are ‘the poor’ discussed by one the same as the ‘the poor’ discussed by another. What of lower class, working class? One is forced to examine the context of the discussion and determine from that context whether or not the various studies are referring more or less to the same population. For the sociologist this determination rests upon the understanding that he or she is not actually defining the poverty level or the size of the poor population: others –economist, policy makers etc, have already done that. The second related difficulty with an examination of poverty and the poor is that the very term ‘the poor’ often obfuscates the fact that there are often different types of poverty and poor, even within the same society at the same time. Two major theories that have described poverty are:

### **1. The cultural perspective**

Since the 1960 it has been fashionable to speak of a ‘culture of poverty’ in U.S. This term, coined by Oscar Lewis and popularised by Michael Harrington, draws from one of the two major sociological conceptualisations and explanations of poverty in American society. It refers to the lives of the poor or at least many of the urban poor not only economically, but in many other respects as well. They being different or deviant with respect to a whole set of pattern of behavior, it is suggested, sets them apart basically from the rest of the society. According to the cultural perspective on poverty, the lower class is seen as manifesting patterns of behavior and values which are characteristically different from those of the dominant society and culture. Moreover, according to the culturalists, these unique patterns of behaviour and values are transmitted inter-generationally through socialization and have become the sub-cultural determinants of the lower socio-economic status of the poor.

### **2. The situational perspective**

In contrast to the cultural perspective, there is the alternative situational or structural perspective according to which poor are viewed in a very different light. Granting that the poor do manifest statistically unique pattern of behaviour, the situationalist argues that these derive not internally, generated by the unique values of the poor, but rather

externally, as the inevitable consequence of their occupying unfavorable position in a restrictive social structure. The poor behave differently not because they possess their own unique value systems. But on the contrary, because they possess their own unique value system, though they have internalized the dominant values but do not have the opportunity to realize these values through the socially sanctioned avenues. To loving about a change in so far as poverty is concerned, the situationalist argue, requires not changing the poor themselves, but rather changing their situation by correcting the restrictive social structure.

## **22.5 Poverty Studies in India**

Poverty studies in India have been preserve of the economists rather than sociologists (Bardhan and Srinivasan. 1974, Dantwala. 1973, Krisnaswami). They have been driven by the preoccupation with development planning in which economists have played leading part. The Planning Commission, set up soon after independence, played a leading part in initiating, stimulating and organizing the research on poverty. The cause, nature and eradication of poverty in India have been subjects of long debate. In the colonial period, the main pre-occupation of Indian writers on the topic was with the poverty of India. This was traced to exploitation by and unequal exchange with the imperial power. After de-colonization, the instruments of policy became national and the debate shifted inward to address poverty within India. This process of enquiry into conditions of poverty has been influenced by the government policies for the mitigation of poverty and inequality. Poverty reduction is a prominent objective of social and economic development in the Indian constitution, finding expressions in plans, policy statements and programmes. Poverty has long been recognized as an interlocking condition of assetlessness, underemployment, low-wages and incomes, proneness to diseases, illiteracy, gender, and economic vulnerability social disadvantage and political powerlessness. The condition itself is not sharply defined and enquiry into it has had certain distinctive preoccupations. These have varied from one phase to another.

The types of research studies on poverty in India can be classified into:

1. The early corpus of research in India has addressed the measurement of poverty, expressed in terms of a poverty line related to income or more commonly to estimates of consumption expenditure based on successive rounds of the National Sample Survey (NSS). The poverty line began life defined as a per capita monthly consumption of Rs.15 for the rural population or Rs.20 for the urban in 1960-61 prices (Planning Commission 1962). More recently this norm has been modified to the expenditure necessary to acquire a daily consumption of 2400 kilo calories in rural areas and 2100 in urban one(Planning Commission 1981). The poverty line is thus a concept closely related to subsistence survival. Research tended to focus on insights to be got from numbers, proportions, regional distribution and trends over time (Bardan and Srinivasan 1974) an influential argument related to the concept of the poverty line was also made for govt. action in the form of public works and employment generation programmes (Dandekar and Rath 1971). The analysis of trends in the incidence of both rural and urban poverty showed that it was characterized by fluctuations largely stemming from variation in agricultural output, which were the results of seasonal conditions. The proportion of people below the poverty line varied roughly between 40 and 50%, while absolute numbers of the rural poverty increased relentlessly.

2. A second concern has been more specifically with the breakdown of poverty by state or region (international labour organization 1977). Poverty studies at the regional levels also draw attention to inadequacies in basic needs fulfillments and to a whole host of specific macro-level features which are responsible for the incidence and perpetuation of poverty (Kurien, 1981 for Tamilnadu).

3. A third body of work has acted as a voluntary or co-opted vigilance force for the state and has critically evaluated the implementation and impact of Anti-poverty programmes, particularly those related to asset transfers and employment creation. These programmes appears to be characterized in the general run of such work, by inadequate scale, by narrowed reach down to the poor and by the proneness to waste, leakage and inefficiency inherent in bureaucratic delivery systems, exacerbated by lack of local participation.

4. In recent years research on poverty has branched off in a number of directions which go beyond the strict framework of the poverty line: exploring aspects of the

complexity of the condition such as the relationship between poverty and extreme events, ecological degradation, gender, age, caste and legal access; examining the conceptualization and experience of poverty of the poor themselves and carrying out participatory and action research ( Chambers ed.1989).

5. Related to this, the fifth type of poverty research consists of micro-level research studies of small localities, villages and slums are no recent phenomena. They have rarely addressed themselves explicitly to poverty or to Anti-poverty policy. Instead in examining economic structure, be they agrarian or urban, micro studies have located poverty socially, sought to understand the textures of deprivation and explored the processes and relations which create and perpetuate it. Many of these studies are specific and counterintuitive.

Poverty studies in India have concentrated on counting the number of units—usually households or individuals—falling below a certain level of consumption expenditure or income. Amartya Sen (1973) wrote, ‘The Indian poor may not be accustomed to receiving much help, but they are beginning to get used to being counted. The poor in this country have lately been lined up in all kinds of different ways and have subjected to several sophisticated head counts.’ It was widely believed among planners, policy makers and the intelligentsia that economic stagnation was at the root of most social evils and that economic growth would be the engine of social transformation. But later it was realized that both within and outside the Planning Commission that high rate of growth might be accompanied, particularly in the short run, by an increase rather than a decrease in poverty.

## **22.6 Urban Poverty**

The emergence during broadly the same historical period of industrial capitalism on the one hand and democratic institutions on the other set in motion important changes in poverty. The demographic and social dislocations of the early phase of the industrial revolution probably increased the magnitude, the severity and the intensity of poverty. They certainly made poverty more visible, particularly in the industrial towns and cities where large numbers of labouring poor were to be found, in and out of ill-paid and insecure employment. They received scientific attention from those from writers such as

Engels and Marx and literary attention from those such as Charles Dickens. Even the first great sociological studies of poverty in Britain, those by Booth and Rowntree, were studies of urban poverty. The new economic order created not only great poverty but also great wealth. Industrial capitalism changed the spatial distribution of population. In rural societies based agricultural and handicraft, poverty tends to be dispersed. It tends to be concentrated in industrial societies., particularly in the early stages of industrialisation. There is nothing really comparable to the industrial slums spawned by early capitalism in even relatively poor and stagnant agricultural societies. As Engels (1973) put in his classic account of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century England:

### **Reflection and Action 22.1**

Read on of the novels of Charles Dickens available in your local or Study Centre Library. Red it and then write an essay on the “poverty in England during the Industrial Revolution” basing on the description provided by Dickens in his novel.

Compare your description and analysis on poverty in England with those of other students at your study center.

Every great city has one or more slums, where the working class is crowded together. True, poverty often dwells in hidden alleys close to the palaces of the rich; but in general, a separate territory has been assigned to it, where, removed from the sight of the happier classes, it may struggle along as it can.

Poverty and overcrowding are the two most visible features of the industrial slum. Booth's enquiry revealed the extent of concentration of poverty in the industrial and commercial capital of the world. A striking feature of his study was the use of maps showing the distribution of poverty in the city of London with different colours to indicate the degree of it street by street. It is not as if the territorial concentration of poverty or even the segregation of the poor was unknown in pre-industrial rural communities. India provides a classic example of segregation and exclusion prevalent since long before the advent of industrial capitalism. Detailed ethnographic studies have shown over and over again how certain sections of the village community, usually the

poorest, residentially segregated from and excluded from many of the common amenities of village life (Beteille 1965). Segregation and exclusion were governed by caste in India just as they were governed by race elsewhere, but poverty has a large part to play in these operations. Social disability and economic disadvantage went hand in hand in the past as they still do to a great extent. The studies by Booth, Rowntree and others were concerned with the social as well as the economic aspects of poverty. Income and expenditure were important, but other factors such as security of livelihood, disconnection from family and community and overcrowding, sanitation and health were also important. Sociological accounts of poverty tend to lack precision but they aim at a rounded picture. Individuals and families may suffer from a chronic sense of loss and deprivation even where there is an increase in their average earning and expenditure and poverty studies would remain incomplete unless they took some account of this sense of loss and deprivation. The early phase of industrial capitalism are marked throughout the world by large movements of population, from villages to towns and cities and across geographical and cultural regions. Although migration routes follow, even across large geographical distances, the ties of kinship, affinity and community, this does not always guarantee livelihood and security to the individual migrant. Economic hardship is often accompanied by social and cultural dislocation. The new settlements that emerge often have a makeshift character, and there is laxity in the rules for the regulation of conduct. Women and children become victims of new forms of social abuse.

## 22.7 Urban Poverty in India

The acceleration of structural changes and poverty analysis is that, the level of urban is more closely linked with overall indicators of economic development than with specific indicators related to industrialization or urbanization. Indeed, the close correlation with level of rural poverty indicates that the two cannot be viewed separately. Given relatively high labour mobility, this is not surprising. Increasing level of urban welfare naturally pulls in job aspirants from rural areas if conditions there are much worse. Conversely, rural prosperity has its reflection in relative urban prosperity through generation of urban activities resulting from demand stimulation. It is also of some significance that the variance in rural poverty is much higher than in urban poverty. Urban activities are

essentially footloose- urban labour markets are probably more national in character than the rural labour markets. Moreover rural productivity is more clearly rooted in an immovable assets –land and hence less prone to greater variance between states. The rate of change in the employment structure has lagged far behind that of output and value added. Manufacturing activities have indeed grown apace but not perhaps fast enough. There is a clear evidence of an accelerating change in the employment structure also, contrary to the popular impression manufacturing employment and not the tertiary sector has been the fastest growing sector. There seems to have been a greater tendency of industrial dispersal up to the mid –1970 the subsequent. From the evidence it is difficult to argue that industrial dispersal had any significant effect on urban poverty removal- though the correlation of urban poverty and manufacture activity are generally in the right direction. The key regional pattern that emerges is really on east-west divide. The states with persistently high poverty level both rural and urban are Bihar, MP, Orissa, UP and Tamil Nadu. The advance states of West Bengal and Maharashtra are also exhibit high level of rural poverty. Thus the three traditionally advanced industrial states: West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu all exhibits high levels of rural poverty. As a result their urban poverty levels are also not low as might have been expected. What is of great interest is that Haryana and Punjab are found to be the most successful in all spheres and this have been achieved without large-scale industrial investment. Yet the growth in manufacturing employment is among the highest in these states including employment in household industries, which is generally declining elsewhere. The level of urban poverty is lowest in these states as well, non-agricultural employment in both rural and urban areas.

Along with all these changes, urbanization also accelerated significantly in these states. So the key to removal of urban poverty is agricultural growth. It is difficult to sustain high growth rate in manufacturing activity and employment without the accompanying improvements in agricultural productivity. In deed the magnitude of non-agricultural employment growth that is needed for poverty removal can only occur if there is adequate growth in agricultural productivity. The evidence from the older industrialized states is clear: poverty removal in these states is stymied by languishing hinterlands

despite high levels of industrialization and urbanization. The effect of accelerated agricultural growth would be most felt in the generation of non-agricultural activities both in rural as well as in the small and medium towns whose primary function is the service of their hinterland.

Big cities are then indirectly affected through operation of the labour market and through enhanced demand for their products and services from the small and medium towns. The decay of the eastern region emerges as the most significant problem. The strategy of locating heavy industries in the eastern and central states has had little beneficial impact in terms of poverty removal. Vast areas in Bihar, MP, Orissa, UP, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka have very low productivity agricultural regions. Their levels of urbanization and industrialization are among the lowest in the world-along with some of the highest indices of poverty. Industrial dispersal in the absence of significant direct attack on agricultural productivity will do little to reduce urban or rural poverty in these areas. All the evidence suggests that the slow decrease in poverty in India has been caused by slow overall structural change. The fact that employment structure has changed much more slowly than that of value added suggest that the investment strategy has been wrong, being aimed at a dispersal of heavy and large industry rather than agriculture and light industries. A self-sustaining plan poverty removal in urban and rural areas can only be reached if the investment strategy is oriented toward a much more accelerated generation of non-agricultural employment.

### **Reflection and Action 22.2**

Conduct a field study by visiting a nearby village or town or a municipal corporation in a city where you live. Interview at least 10 people across different class and occupations, such as, wage labourers clerks, bank officers, administrative officers, etc. Ask them to give such information as amount of wages or salaries they get; how much they send per month on consumable items and how many a non-consumable durable items

Write a report on “Poverty: Reality or Perception” in about two pages based on your own assessment of the accounts gathered by you. Discuss the report with other students at your study center.

## **22.8 Globalization and poverty**

Under economic globalization, many countries have opened up their economies to free flow of finance capital, technology and goods. This has de established many of the traditional industries and led to reemployment of productive resources. It has also led to the reduction in the role of the state and shift from welfare to a market friendly system of governance. In urban sector it has meant handing over the responsibility of providing certain basic amenities to the private sector under commercial framework. While this has been the case in all urban areas it can be seen more clearly in large cities. Further it has meant large-scale displacement or eviction of slums for allocating of more land for commercial and other profitable usages.

Although the process of globalization strong and often all encompassing, the local communities have continued to pursue is their own demand and agendas. In countries having a democratic polity like India, the conflicts and contradictions between the countervailing forces are more evident. In most of the less developed countries in the world rural poverty agenda has dominated the national policy debates and urban poverty is being neglected. Unfortunately, there is not much recognition of the fact that unless the process of urban industrial development is guided within a macro-economic frame work and if urbanization cases are not well managed, the deficiencies in the basic services such as housing, water supply and sanitation, etc are likely to acquire alarming proportions, which would jeopardize the survival strategy or the coping mechanisms of the urban poor.

Experience of Latin American countries, which underwent globalization in 1980 under external compulsions, shows that in several of these countries, urban poverty increased starkly. With it came up the problems of insecurity of property and life of the elite, group violence unhygienic living conditions and epidemics. Also the social structure got reorganized and there was an increase in female-headed households in the urban areas. Increase inequalities led to higher levels of relative poverty. The process of urbanization has not been healthy and has felt to promote balanced regional development in India.

After liberalization, new industries have often been located in the villages and small towns around the big cities, due to easy availability of land, access to unorganized labour market and less stringent implementation of environmental regulation. This has resulted in what may be described as “degenerated peripheralisation” where the pollutant industries and poor migrants are obliged to locate in the hinterland that have very poor quality of living. The smaller urban centres in the country are more rooted in their regional economy and thereby experience on average low and unstable demographic growth. The few cities of which are emerging as global centres, on the other hand, exhibit high and steady demographic growth reflecting strength of their economic base.

## **22.9 The Changing Policy Perspective on Poverty**

Poverty in India has generally been seen as a problem of rural areas at the policy making level, as has been the case of many less developed countries. Official statistics supported this view until the 1980s, when urban poverty levels were about 8 to 10 % points below rural levels, irrespective of the poverty lines and price indices used by experts in their calculations. But the scenario has changed significantly in recent years. By the late 1980s the gap between the two poverty levels narrowed so much that the Expert group on poverty measurement, set up by the Planning Commission, reported a higher figure for urban than rural. In the 1990s though urban poverty levels have once again dipped below rural poverty, the rural-urban poverty differential in 1993-94 was narrower than in early 1980 or before. The Planning Commission using the controversial consumption expenditure data from the 55<sup>th</sup> round of the NSS for the year 1999-2000, the gap between the rural and urban poverty has gone up.

Table no. 1  
Trends in poverty in India

S. No.	Year	Number and Percentage of Poor					
		Rural		Urban		Combined	
		No. (lakh)	%	No. (lakh)	%	No. (lakh)	%
1	1973-74	2612.91	56.44	603.12	49.23	3216.03	54.93
2	1977-78	2642.46	53.07	677.40	47.40	3319.86	51.81
3	1983	2517.15	45.61	752.93	42.15	3270.08	44.76
4	1987-88	2293.96	39.06	833.52	40.12	3127.48	39.34
5	1993-94*	----	33.35	----	33.84	----	33.47
6	1999-2000**	1932.43	27.09	670.07	23.62	2602.50	26.10

Source: Amitabh Kundu and Darshini Mahadevia (Eds.). 2002. Poverty and Vulnerability in a globalising metropolis Ahmedabad, New Delhi.

In many Indian states, urban poverty is due to lack of economic development in others it is due to the nature of development itself. Urban poverty thus appears to be a complex phenomenon requiring serious attention of administrators and policy makers. It is often argued that urban areas do not need government support or budgetary resources to tackle their problems. People here have higher income level and can mobilize resources internally or receive investments from capital market. While the urban sector has indeed attracted more private sector resources, particularly since the launch of structural adjustment programmes, most of the investment has gone to commercially viable infrastructure projects. Funds for slum improvements have been extremely meagre. Given the political economy putting forward demand for transparency, discouraging transfer of funds across sectors. It is difficult for the local government to mobilize resources from rich areas within the city and cross subsidies civic amenities in slum colonies.

## 22.10 Conclusion

While in the late nineteenth century poverty in Britain was viewed mainly as a social problem, in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century India it was viewed as economic one, more specifically as problem arising out of economic backwardness. It is undeniable that economic stagnation and backwardness make the removal of poverty very difficult. It is very difficult, and this is particularly true when economic stagnation is accompanied by high population growth.

But poverty including absolute poverty persists even in countries that are economically advanced and have little population growth.

The assault on poverty in India has relied on four types of strategy: growth, redistribution, basic needs and direct-targeted programmes. This classification can be used to present a resume of performance. The long-term growth rate since independence has been 3.8 %, though this declines to 1.1 % after allowing for population growth. Growth however has been uneven over time, space and sectors of the economy. In this mixed picture, economic growth has at best constrained the spread of poverty and at worst has accentuated structural and regional inequalities. The redistribution of assets by means of land reform has been repeatedly proclaimed as a national objective, while responsibility for implementation has been vested in states. Ideological commitments to land reform have been weakened by the need to mediate between competing classes of beneficiaries (the land less and small peasant) and adjudicate between compensated and coerced redistribution and by difficulties in determining and implementing land ceiling. As a result, while 10-12% of cropland might be potentially available for redistribution. Basic needs provision did not await the initiative of either academic or international advocacy. Large proportions of the poor lived with few and variable 'minimum needs'. Their provision varies state-wise according to rural- urban location, gender and castes status. Minimum needs provision is neither decentralized nor is it directed at primary levels of deprivation. Direct programmes, the type of intervention have been related to the concept of target group. This concept itself has been derived from the poverty line which demarcates the technically (income or consumption based) poor and the technically not poor. The concept of the poverty line and of target groups are thus closely related.

## **22.11 Further Reading**

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## **Unit 23**

### **Slums**

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- 23.8 Conclusion
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#### **Learning Objective**

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- describe the nature of slums
- give a brief history of slums
- outline the characteristics of the slums
- discuss the functions of slums
- describe the Indian context of slums and their socio-economic profile, and
- discuss the approaches towards solving the problem of slums in India.

#### **23.1 Introduction**

It is a fact that slum is basically an area of the worst form of struggle for the basic needs of life. The slum is the complex product of many products as it is true of many other social phenomena but poverty is the foremost one. It is interplay of objective economic facts and subjective group standards. Low-income forces people to live in slums. This paper presents a sociological analysis of the urban problems called slums, especially focusing on the various aspects such as nature and characteristic of the slum. In the first section this paper tries to examine the basic nature of the slum, which is not just an area of substandard housing condition, but it refers to the actual living conditions of the people in an urban area.

The characteristics of the slum has been presented under various subheadings like housing condition, overcrowding and congestion, poor sanitation and health, apathy and social isolation, deviant behaviour and the culture of the slum, that is, a way of life. In brief, this paper also tries to understand various functions of the slum, which met various needs and had served several useful functions for certain social groups like poor and migrant workers etc. under the section ‘A brief historical perspective on the slum,’ this paper traces the socio-historical analysis of slums starting from the slums of ancient Roman cities, the Jewish ghetto, British slums of 19<sup>th</sup> century to the slums of U.S before the World War-II. This paper also undertakes a systematic study of the socio-economic profile of Indian slums and also illustrates with a case study like Dharavi of Mumbai. The final section deals with various theoretical approaches related to the solution of slum problems. The most prominent ones discussed here are the traditional welfarist approach, the developmental approach, the Marxist or socialist approach and humanitarian approach.

The slums constitute the most important and persistent problem of urban life. They are the chief sources of crime and delinquency, of illness and death from diseases. Slums are of all shapes, types and forms. Mumbai has its packed multistoried chawls, New York- its Harlem and its East side, Chicago- its black belt, London- its east end. Families in Bangkok crowd together in ‘Pile villages’ composed of poorly constructed wooden shacks, bamboo hubs and straw hovels along the small lanes of Kolkata, Dacca and Lagos, which stream with the high humidity and stink from open drains. Impoverished shantytown or squatter shacks constructed from junks cover the hillside of Rio de Janeiro, Lima, Hong Kong and other Asian, African and South American cities. Even the most affluent nation in the world have slums. At least one fifth of urban population of U.S lives in poor or sub standard housing. Like U.S, other capitalist nations of the world have slums. These nations have progressed on other fronts but the shelter problems have eluded solutions. Even in socialist countries where massive urban renewal programs have taken place and where private ownership of land does not exists, slums do exist. The developing countries or the underdeveloped countries, which have chosen the capitalist path of development, are often referred to as the Third World, where the trends of

urbanization since the Second World War have been interesting, instructive and alarming. Steaks of contrasts in all spheres of life characterize Third World. Some of these contrasts assume the form of contradictions. For instances, in Mumbai where perhaps some of the worst slums in the world can be found the skyline is getting changed by an eruption of skyscrapers of the most modern dimension, accommodating airline companies, five star hotels, officers of multinationals and the affluent few of the metropolis. The slum offends the eyes, nose and conscience but it exists all the same. We somehow learnt to live complacently with such contradictions, which eloquently proclaim our distorted sense of priorities. It would not be too sweeping to say that the slum has become an inevitable and expanding feature of cities in developing countries. Shelterless people grab every patch of vacant spot to pitch a makeshift shack. In Mumbai besides a few lakh who lives in slums and sleeps. In the streets, one can see tiny, shaky dwellings made of tin sheets, mud, wood, and rags even under the trees.

## **23.2 Nature of the Slum**

Slums may be characterized as areas of substandard housing conditions within a city. A slum is always an area. The term housing conditions refers to actual living conditions rather than mere physical appearance of the area. The substandard is to be taken not in an objective or technological but rather in a relative social sense i.e. compared with the recognized standard at a given time in a specific country. The cave dwelling of prehistoric people, the dugouts etc. of pioneers are all substandard according to our notion, but they do not create slum conditions. Slum word has a long and a negative connotation. It has been almost an epithet, implying evil, strange and something to be shunned and avoided. It is being apparently derived from “slumber” as slum were once thought by majority to be unknown, back streets presumed to be sleepy and quite. (The oxford universal dictionary.1995. New York, Oxford University Press)

There is a disagreement over whether people make slums or slums make people. Are substandard housing conditions due to social standards behavior of certain groups or vice- versa? The slum is a complex product of many products as it is true of many other social phenomena. But poverty is the foremost one, interplay of objective economic facts

and subjective group standard. Low-incomes forces people to live in slums. Slum residents are negligent and do not mind dirt. They have neither money nor time to their area clean or clean if themselves. Lack of basic infrastructure, like drains, drinking water, electricity and location gives the slums a very ungainly picture.

There are three main types of slums – (i) The first type is original slum. It is an area which from the very beginning, consisted of unsuitable buildings, these sections are beyond recovery and need to be razed. The example of this type is the Mexican slum in Wichita. (ii) The second type of slums consists of slums created by the departure of the middle class families to other sections and subsequent deterioration of the area. The example of this type is South End slum in Boston. (iii) The third type is the most unpleasant type of slum. It is mainly a phenomenon of transition. Once the area around a main business district has become blighted, physical and social deterioration spreads rapidly. This kind of slum teams with accommodation for the destitute, home of prostitution, beggars, homeless men, habitual criminals, chronic alcoholics etc. This type of slum clearly requires defines rehabilitation.

### **23.3 Brief Historical Perspectives on the Slum**

A study of ancient Roman ruins indicates the presence of slums in ancient times. In medieval times cities were so crowded that destitute people though small in number were kept out of the city. The Jewish ghetto was a unique type of medieval urban slum. Its uniqueness stems from an interesting and complex set of social, religious, political and economic factors that created a unified homogenous group which often lived for centuries, isolated from the rest of the society in slum like conditions. This situation deteriorated with increasing urbanization in Europe and U.S. The origin of the British slums during the nineteenth century as explained by Lewis Mumford (1990) is related to the industrial modern city and the factory system. Frederick Engels (1990) in his study of slum conditions in Manchester in 1844, the first manufacturing city of the world stated that the recent origin of slums belong to the industrial epoch.

So, after the industrial revolution, the poor were needed to work in urban factories. It was then the modern slum began to grow. The low wages permitted no decent quarters. And rapidly increasing industry multiplied the number of urban masses. Housing has to be provided and the tenements of the working class were made of poor material, rooms were small and low, baths were omitted, toilet facilities and water outlets had to be shared by several people. In U.S, the process of urbanization was quicker than in Europe, and low paid workers immigrated in masses. Big slums were essential phenomena of a few large cities. The invention of automobile the subsequent exodus from more centrally located residences, added to the deterioration of once satisfactory areas. Two World Wars, during which building activities were sharply curtailed, added to the slum problem.

### **23.4 Characteristics of the Slums**

Slums vary from one type to another, but certain general patterns of slums are universal. Although, the slum is generally characterized by inadequate housing, deficient facilities, overcrowding and congestions involve much more than these elements. Sociologically, it is a way of life, a sub culture with a set of norms and values, which is reflected in poor sanitation and health practices, deviant behavior and attributes of apathy and social isolations. People who live in slums are isolated from the general power structure and are regarded as inferiors. Slum dwellers in turn harbor, suspicions of the outside world.

Some of the features of slums are:

- 1. Housing conditions**

In terms of the physical conditions and housing standards it is important to keep in mind the comparative nature of the definitions. A slum should be judged physically according to the general living standards of a country. Slums have commonly been defined as those portions of cities in which housing is crowded, neglected deteriorated and often obsolete. Many of the inadequate housing conditions can be attributed to poorly arranged structures, inadequate lighting and circulation, lack of sanitary facility, overcrowding and inadequate maintenance.

- 2. Overcrowding and congestion**

A slum may be an area which is overcrowded with buildings or a building overcrowded with people or both. Density does not always result in unfortunate social consequence, the issue is primarily one of overcrowding. Congestion is again a judgment

about the physical condition of the building in terms of high density per block, acre or square mile. William. F. Whyte (1943) in his well known sociological study, Street Corner Society situated in Boston's north end, stressed upon the importance of overcrowding as a criterion for measuring slum conditions. Some slum areas like in Delhi, have 40, 00,000 people per square mile.

### 3. Neighborhood facilities

A poor slum is invariably associated with poor facilities and community services. Along with shabbiness and dilapidation, schools are of poor quality and other public facilities are often insufficient. Streets and sidewalks often go un-repaired and rubbish and garbage are infrequently collected adding to the undesirable environment. Shortage of water, electricity and sanitary facility are common in most of the slums.

### 4. Poor Sanitation and Health

Slums are generally been dirty and unclean places which is defined largely in terms of the physical deterioration, stressing particularly unsanitary conditions and lack of sufficient facilities like water and latrines. These factors have resulted in high rates death and disease. These factors have always been typical of slum areas where overcrowding and presence of rats and other pest complicate the problem of health and sanitation. In slum areas of developing countries, the rate of disease, chronic illness and infant mortality are exceptionally high.

### 5. Deviant Behavior

A high incidence of deviant behavior- crime, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, drunkenness, drug usage, mental disorder, suicide, ill legitimacy and family maladjustments have long been associated with slum living. It is a fact that vice may be found in slums but is by no means confined only to the slums. Due to the lack of money and power often slum dwellers are prove to be pressurized by the goons of upper classes to commit crime. It is a vicious cycle for the sum dwellers.

### 6. The Culture of the Slum- a way of life

Slums differ widely with respect to the social organization of there Inhabitants. They range from the slums in which the inhabitants are strangers to one another, to the family slums in which there is a wide acquaintance between the inhabitants.

Slums inhabited by immigrant groups may have a firm social organization. Culture might be defined as system of symbols or meanings for the normative conduct of standards, having three distinct properties. It is transmittable, it is learned and it is shared. The slum has a culture of its own and this culture is the way of life. This way of life is passed from generation to generation with its own rationale, structure ad defense mechanism, which provides the means to continue in spite of difficulties and deprivation. It is the habits, customs and behavior pattern people have learned and which they hold that move them to act in a particular way. Although, these cultural patterns are typical of the slum, form ethnic groups to ethnic groups, from own society to society to another.

#### 7. Apathy and Social Isolation

Every residential area within the modern city tends to be socially isolated from others, partly by choice and partly by location. The slum is especially so, as it is inhabited by the people of the lowest status. The chief link with rest of the community is their identification with labour market, but there may be an additional link through politics. A slum also has an image in the eyes of the larger community. There is a societal reaction to slum dwellers. The non-slum dweller often associates the physical appearance and difficult living conditions of the slums with belief in the “Natural inferiority” of those who live in slums. This reaction has important consequences in the social isolation of slum dwellers and their exclusion, from power and participation in urban society. The slum dwellers often lack an effective means of communication with the outside world. Because of apathy, lack of experience in communicating with outsiders and their own powerlessness to make their voice heard. William. F. Whyte (1943) stated that although the north end slum studied in his work on street corner society was a mysterious, dangerous and depressing place to an outsider, it provided an organized and familiar environment for those who lived in it.

### **23.5 Functions of the Slums**

The slums have met various needs and have served several useful functions for the slum residents. The most common functions of the slums have been to provide housing for the

lowest income groups and migrants in the city. The slums also serve as places where group living and association on the basis of villages, regions, tribes or ethnic or racial groups may develop. Whyte (1943) found an organized way of life in slums, which offered satisfaction to its residents. The slums also perform a function as a type of “School” to educate newcomers to the city. It gives them a place to become oriented upon arrival, to find first jobs and to learn the ways of city life. Another important function of the slum is that of offering a place of residence to those who prefer to live an anonymous life. Which includes migratory workers, criminals, chronic alcoholic and workers in illegal enterprises.

### **23.6 The Indian Context: Socio-Economic Profile of the Indian Slums**

The predominantly rural and agricultural nature of Indian society can no longer be called “A nation of villages”. Four fifths of India’s population presently resides in its half million villages. Today several cities of India are huge metropolitan areas and these cities have become centers of modern technology and the hope of future progress. Among the nations of the world, India is being increasingly judged by the stature and condition of its great cities, where lie the core of its commercial and industrial power and the strength of its transportation, distribution and communication system. The cities of India have played an important role in breaking away from tradition-bound social practices and from the cities most of the modernization processes in the country radiate. Political and social reform movements have largely originated in the cities and have then spread out.

A concomitant of urbanization in India has been in the continuous growth of slum population, as most internal migration has been concentrated in the slums. Slums have long history in India. The physical and social conditions of today in India slums are generally considered the worst. Although India is a large heterogeneous country who’s diversity often makes generalization difficult. Slum conditions can still be characterized in general terms. The streets, lanes and open drains in typical slum areas are filthy. The Indian slum, however, is far more complex than the mere aggregate of these appalling physical condition; it is a way of life. Rates of diseases, chronic illness and infant mortality remain high and there is little knowledge of health and sanitation, nutrition or

childcare. Illiteracy is exceedingly high and cultural and recreation activities are almost entirely lacking except those provided by such commercial enterprises as the cinema and gambling. Most slum dwellers are apathetic and suffer a great sense of futility. They have little community pride or even consensus, and they often blame the local authorities for their plight. They have become antagonistic towards them, seldom co-operating with municipal personnel in efforts to improve their immediate areas or the city as a whole.

A. R. Desai and S. Devadas Pillai (1990), in their work “Slums and urbanization” draw their attention to another significant feature of development postulates adopted by state, which has vitally affected the pattern of urbanization and type of urban living that is being created in the country. Our Constitution has laid down the right to property, which is basic and fundamental, but not the right to work or right to adequate housing, education and employment. The Constitution also proclaims certain freedom and rights to citizens viz. right to move throughout the country, right to life and security and freedom to search for earning and prerequisites needed for that search within legal limits but at the same time Constitution does not ensure the right to have resources for securing livelihood, source of earning, of adequate facilities for stay and other things essential, for mobile jobs for citizens to ensure a better purchasing power to live adequately.

The peculiar dilemma created by contradictory prescription by the Constitution, as well as the path of development, persuaded by rulers legally sanctified by the Constitution, have generated economic development. A small class of property owners is developing at the top, while at the lower levels vast growing section of property less citizens fending for their income for selling their skills and labour is emerging at an exponential rate. This pattern of class differentiation, income and asset concentration on the one hand and pauperization of a considerable section of the population driven to unemployment and under-employed state forced to resort to begging, garbage gathering and various types of legally non permitted are means of petty trades.

This class configuration, emerging as a direct result of government policies is creating a weird strange pattern of urbanization and urban living. On the one hand, there exists an

urban sector of rich with posh localities, residential areas glittering shopping malls, luxurious hotels, high style recreation centers as well as sophisticated educational and official complexes for a small minority of wealthy citizens. And on the other hand, urban areas it generates a majority of urban poor living in slums and involves a constant job hunting and income finding activities lacking adequate purchasing power. They cannot afford to secure shelter, amenities, facilities and services even for basic decent existence.

### **23.7 Approaches to the Slum Problems**

Some experts advocates the policy of slum clearance while others believe proving welfare services to slum dwellers. Still others stress providing greater economic opportunity for slum dwellers. All however have serious limitations as solutions either alone or together to the slum dwellers.

The traditional welfarist approaches advocate the policy of destroying the slums, tearing it down physically and redevelopment with subsidized housing. It is believed that providing welfare services to slum dwellers is the best way to bring about changes in slum areas and to solve the slum problems. This traditional approach to slum problems through clearance and redevelopment with subsidized housing has been criticized in its application to the developing countries. As the cities in underdeveloped nations raise their standard the poor people from rural areas flock to the city slums. The subsidized housing project will make cities more attractive and the number of poor rural people arriving in cities will become difficult to handle. So the only way to reduce urban slum areas is to raise rural living standard to those of a city. Slum clearance however is not exclusively a matter of replacing standardizing housing with new planned slums. In fact proper orientation of residents to a better and organized way of life and to the maintenance of the entire neighborhood it is essential, and this orientation requires the system of education and motivation of all the people, men and women, and children to the fundamental of personal hygiene, home management and environment sanitation. There is no question that measures to bring about improvements in economic conditions will be of great value to slum people. These includes more adequate wages, guaranteed minimum income, in- discriminatory employment policies, accessible and inexpensive

credit, programme to train and retain youths and adults, more effective training for certain occupation and improve social security and public assistance.

But there is another aspect of this welfarist approach to slum problems. Gita Dewan Verma (2000) has highlighted this issue in her work “slumming India”. She argues that the real problem is not the pervasive urban squalor that offends us all, but rather the moral and intellectual bankruptcy that sustains it. She states that for the urban poor minimal ‘landless’ options- outreach services instead of Hospitals, street education instead of proper schools, slum upgrading in the place of housing-all have become very fashionable. They are also one-way streets. Once all urban land is lost to less essential, more glamorous uses there will be no turning the slumming clock back. After all it is impossible that an IIM built on an excessive 200 acres of land or a new fangled cyber park or any of the plush farmhouses larger than the ceiling limits will be dynamited to make room for T.B. sanatorium or a municipal school or a low income housing project and if and when our welfare state happens to change its mind about what is needed for urban welfare and to stop urban slumming. According to her even competing interests in urban resources the state should make planned development a fundamental need of urbanites, calling for a high degree of responsibility on the part of those in charge of urban governance. In such a setup solution like clearing a few slums or building a few tenements for the poor will touch only the fringe of the problem, and it will take the existing social setup for granted. Urban renewal programmes based on this assumption are far from the real answer.

Urban community development offers a new developmental approach to some of the problems of urban areas in general and of the slums in particular. It involves two fundamental ideas:- the development of effective community feeling within an urban context and the development of self-help and citizens participation, of individual initiative in seeking community integration and change. In other words this approach relies directly on the slum dwellers themselves. If their apathy and dependence can be overcome and replaced by pride and a sense of initiative, the slum dwellers can make good use of solving their manifold problems. The approach to the problems of the city slums through urban community development involves the following elements:-

- (1) Creation of a sense of social cohesion on a neighborhood basis and strengthening of group interrelationship.
- (2) Encouragement and stimulation of self-help, through the initiative of the individuals in the community.
- (3) Stimulation by outside agencies where initiative for self-help is lacking.
- (4) Reliance upon persuasion rather than upon compulsion to produce change through the efforts of people.
- (5) Identification and development of local leadership.
- (6) Development of civic consciousness and acceptance of civic responsibilities.
- (7) Use of professional and technical assistance to support the efforts of the people involved.
- (8) Coordination of city services to meet neighborhood needs and problems.
- (9) Provisions of training in democratic procedures that may result in decentralization of some govt. functions.

There are four main objectives of urban community development programme applicable to the slums are- (i) development of community feeling, (ii) self-help improvement of a person or a group by its own contributions and efforts and largely for its own benefits; indigenous leadership and cooperation between govt. and the people in the use of services. In 1958 Delhi pilot project in urban community development was launched with grants totaling \$170,539 from Ford foundation to the Delhi municipal corporation. (M.B.Clinard,1966) The Delhi pilot project represented both in philosophy and planning, a unique attempt to produce change in urban areas. In its overall objective of developing a programme, organizing communities, enlisting self-help, identifying and training local leadership and working out techniques of change, the Delhi pilot project appears to have been reasonably successful. Apart from some administrative problems, another major problem in such urban community development project is to devise ways of keeping the original momentum of citizen's self- help organizations.

The Marxist and Socialist approach to the problem of slums clearly points out that

if only the land in urban areas is nationalized and removed from the orbit of market operation. (See A.R. Desai and S. Devidas, 1972). This single step, which does not require resources, but only breaking away from bourgeois norms of private property and legitimacy on remuneration to unearned income occurring to ownership, will remove half the problem of the urban areas by ending all activities that have developed around land as a marketable commodity. Abolition of private profit seeking agencies for constructional activities is another essential step for the solution of the urban problems especially slums. Only public assurance and provision of work to every able-bodied worker can provide the vast majority of non-propertied classes the purchasing power so necessary for survival. This assurance can be given only if employment in production, distribution and service is freed from market operation of capitalist competitive economy. An economy based on social ownership of the means of production and a social development that does not treat human beings as commodities.

### **Dharavi Slum: A Case Study**

The humanitarian approach to the problem of slums basically highlights the triumph of the human spirit over poverty. Kalpana Sharma (2000) in her famous case study “Re-discovering Dharavi-A Mumbai Slum” challenges the conventional notion of a slum. According to her Dharavi is much more than a cold statistic. What make it special are the extraordinary people who live there, many of whom have defied fate and an unhelpful state to prosper through a mix of back breaking work, some luck and a great deal of ingenuity. The story of Dharavi illustrates that the most important issue is security of tenure. If the poor people have that they will generate the funds and find ways to improve their own structure. Once the government launched programmes that guaranteed people security, they are willing to redevelop their areas or upgrade their dwellings. Even without aid from government, one can see how people have successfully replaced thatch and bamboo with brick and mortar. However they cannot do anything about the infrastructure that has to be provided by the state. The process and manner in which slums are reorganized or redeveloped have to be done in consultation with the people involved. NGO organization working with urban poor have long urged that women in particular must be involved in the planning and design to redevelop slum settlers. People

know what they need and they will be able to design something that is functional and can be maintained. There is enough evidence of dysfunctional “People housing” to suggest that a more often and consultative process is needed.

In Dharavi, there are already a few examples, like Rajiv Ghandhi cooperative in Kalyan Wadi, which shows what is possible when a community is consulted on all aspects of slum redevelopment. The mainstream institutions of finance have rarely considered the needs of the poor. While Maharashtra government’s plan to provide free housing to slum dwellers is commendable because it recognizes the investments that most of them have already made in their housing. If financial institution can aid the poor in their housing needs, many slum dwellers would be prepared to part the way in financing their housing. This is particularly true of a growing segment of slum dwellers in Mumbai, who are making small regular saving. There are literally hundreds of saving groups in the city that have been putting aside a small amount each month for their future housing needs. Such a saving movement can be up-scaled if it is matched by the availability of formal housing finance. Places like Dharavi flourish because people find work. They attract people because they embody the spirit of enterprise and survival in the face of tremendous obstacles. Architect, Engineers and urban planners think of structures but do not address the life of people. As a result dream townships are planned which do not fulfill anyone’s dreams. Livelihood and shelter has to be seen as one rather than separate entities.

The economic determinant that culminated in the creation of existing slums are still at work however undesirable our slums may be, from a humanitarian viewpoint they do provide shelter to low-income families. If economic growth, full employment or lowering of discrimination towards job applicants should raise the real income of the majority of those living in the slums housing qualities would tend to improve.

### **23.8 Conclusion**

Slums in cities are the worst form of struggle for the teeming masses of people who cannot afford anything better. It is a remarkable, dilapidated, fragile structures which house a high density of population. Slums however, are not just physical housing colonies filled with dirt and disease but is; mentioned; a way of life. It is a distinct culture

where it is difficult to say whether people make slums or slums make people. In this unit you learnt about the characteristics of slums; the brief history of slums, different approaches to the study of slums. You studied about slums in India, different functions of slums and finally learnt about the famous slum in Mumbai city called Dharvi.

### **23.9 Further Reading**

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# **URBAN ISSUES IN INDIA**

## **Unit 24: Environment and Infrastructure**

*Anuradha Banerjee<sup>1</sup>*

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## **Learning Objectives**

After reading this unit you will be able to

- describe the process of urbanization and urban environment in India
- discuss the impact of urbanization on environmental quality
- explain the environmental infrastructure
- describe the policy perspectives on urban environment management; and finally
- describe the process of urban governance and highlight the nature of urban environment

## **SECTION I**

### **Introduction: Urbanisation and Urban Environment in India**

India is the second largest population giant in the world with current population of 1.03 billion (Census of India 2001). Of this, about 285 million people or 27.8 percent of the total population reside in the urban areas of the country. India in 2001 had 10.02 percent of the world's urban population and 21.10 percent of Asia's urban population. Infact, India's urban population is larger than the total population of small countries like France and Germany and larger than the total population of the big countries like Brazil and USA. Again it is larger than the total population of parts of continents like Eastern Africa, Western Asia and Western Europe; and larger than the total population of the whole continent of Australia.

The level of urbanization in terms of the proportion of urban population to total population is low in India, but the urban population in absolute terms is very high. Moreover, most of the urban population is concentrated in the Class I cities accounting for 65 percent of the total urban population and these cities are expanding at a faster rate than average population growth. A more disaggregated level of analysis revels that the million plus cities or the metropolitan cities of India are growing very rapidly and their numbers have constantly increased from 12 in 1981 to 23 in 1991 and 35 in 2001. The total population of these metros accounts for nearly one-third of the total population and 10.5 percent of India's total population in 2001. Again, over 50 percent of the population of these metros live in the five giant conglomerates; Mumbai (16.3 million), Kolkata (13.2 million), Delhi (12.7 million), Chennai (6.4 million), and Bangalore (5.7 million). The population in these cities grew by 52 percent higher than the growth of urban population in India, but compared to the last decade, the pace of

metropolatalisation has slowed down; and the 12 new cities grew at a faster rate than the existing cities, Surat recording the highest growth of 85 percent.

Rapid urbanisation marked by population explosion in the Indian cities can be largely attributed to the large scale rural to urban migration. Due to the uncontrolled urbanization in India, the **quality of life is under threat** particularly in the big cities. **Environmental degradation** has been occurring very rapidly and causing excessive air and water pollution, water shortage in water scarce regions, problems of disposal of solid and hazardous wastes, noise pollution, housing shortage and mushrooming of slums in most of the metropolises of India.

Today the social environment of the cities is also under threat. On account of peculiar problems like unchecked migration, illegal settlements, diverse socio-cultural disparities, uneven distribution of incomes, the phenomenon of **urban poverty** etc, the metropolitan cities are facing **increased criminal activities**. Organized groups, gangsters, professional criminals and even youth and juveniles find crime as a short cut for a lavish life in these cities. Moreover unabated population increase has also led to a **pressure on the existing physical and social infrastructure** of the cities like power supply, supply of potable water, urban transport, educational and health institutions.

Today, urbanization in India is characterized by unplanned and uncontrolled growth leading to urban sprawl. Landuse planning and the pattern of development, relationship between residential areas and industrial areas, commercial and office complexes have a considerable impact on the environment. Most of all, appropriate infrastructure provision has not kept pace with economic growth. Consequently, the **environment** of urban areas, particularly of larger cities, has been **deteriorating rapidly**. **Urban Local Bodies** (ULBs) in India are faced with a plethora of issues that directly impact their capacities to manage municipal service delivery while simultaneously addressing environmental concerns. These include:

- Multiplicity of organisations;
- Inadequate resource mobilization;
- Lack of capability to adopt proper corporate planning;
- Lack of information and information systems; and inadequate monitoring of policy implementation.

Where the municipalities are struggling to provide the basic amenities, to citizens, issues of environmental pollution of hazard management are not accorded priority till matters reach the proportions of a crisis.

## **SECTION II**

### **1. Impact of Urbanisation on Environmental Quality**

Due to increased human activities in the urban centers arising out of industrialisation and commercialization, there is a copious usage of water, energy and other raw materials, transforming them into goods and services and returning the wastes into the environment in the form of emissions and not usable solid wastes. Therefore the cities are becoming the major contributors to local, regional and global environmental problems.

The extent of resource use by a city can be captured by its “*ecological footprint*”. The term coined by the Canadian environmentalist **William Rees**, is concerned with defining the amount of land that is required to supply a city with food and natural resources as well as the area of growing vegetation required to absorb its carbon dioxide output (Rees, 1992). Rees described this as the “*carrying capacity*” of local and distant ecosystems – an approach that was later adopted by **Herbert Girardet** who was influential in drawing up the British proposals for **Habitat II** (Istanbul, Turkey, 1996).

He argued that while cities occupy only 2 percent of the world’s land surface, they consume as much as 75 percent of the world’s resources. In presenting his argument Girardet used London as an example to show how its “footprint” extends over more than 125 times the city’s actual area. One should, however, compare the ecological footprint of cities with that of alternatives. Possibly, it is not urbanisation per se that stresses the environment, but the **level of living** and affluence, and if combined with stupendous population growth, then the impact could be disastrous.

It has been observed that the large cities of poorer countries are growing at a much faster rate than similar cities in the developed world, and India forms no exception to it. Such a heavy and uncontrolled growth places a heavy burden on the environment and infrastructure. Resource shortages are intensified by ever increasing demands for services that need to be supplied at a rate, which often exceeds the country’s economic growth. The current status of environment and infrastructure of the Indian cities raises certain questions in our minds.

- How rapidly are we urbanising?
- What is the impact of rapid urbanization on environment, infrastructure and society at large?
- What should we do to make our urban system sustainable?

In order to address the first question, we should look into the picture of urbanization in India

### **Pattern and Trend of Urbanisation in India: 1991-2001**

The pattern and trend of urban population and the number of towns in India during 1901 to 2001 (Table 1.), shows that the total urban population has increased more than ten times from 26 million in 1901 to 285 million in 2001; whereas total population has increased less than five times from 238 million to 1027 million during the same period. A continuous increase has been noticed in the percentage of urban population from 11 percent in 1901 to 17 percent in 1951 to further 28 percent in 2001. In the same fashion, the number of towns has also increased from 1916 in 1901 to 2422 in 1951 and then to 5161 in 2001. This reveals the process of rapid urbanization in India.

**Table 1. Pattern and Trend of Urbanisation in India**

Census Years	Number of Towns	Urban Population (millions)	Percent Urban	Annual Exponential Growth Rate	Rate of Urbanisation
1901	1916	25.9	10.8	--	--
1911	1908	25.9	10.3	0.0	-0.46
1921	2048	28.1	11.2	0.8	0.87
1931	2220	33.5	12.0	1.7	0.71
1941	2422	44.2	13.8	2.8	1.50
1951	3060	62.4	17.3	3.5	2.54
1961	2700	78.9	18.0	2.3	0.40
1971	3126	109.1	19.9	3.2	1.06
1981	4029	159.5	23.3	3.8	1.72
1991	4689	217.6	25.7	3.1	1.02
2001	5161	284.5	27.8	2.7	0.82

Source: Census of India, 1991, 2001

### **Growth in the Number of Million Plus Cities in India: 1991-2001**

Table 2 shows that the growth in the number and population of the million plus cities in India during 1991 to 2001. There was only one million plus city (Kolkata), in 1901 in India that had increased to 35 in 2001. The total population had also increased in the million plus cities from 1.51 million in 1901 to 107.88 million in 2001; showing almost a fifty fold increase. The percentage decadal growth rate in the total population of million plus cities was noticed to be the highest (121 percent) during 1941 to 1951, which may be attributable to partition of the country. The percentage of total population living in the million plus cities had also shown a considerable increase over the years.

### **Population Growth Rate in the Four Leading Metropolises in India**

More than thirty fold increase has been noticed in the population of Delhi in 100 years, from 0.41 million in 1901 to 12.8 million in 2001, whereas, there has been twenty fold increase in Mumbai's population, from 0.8 million to 16.4 million from 1901 to 2001. However, Chennai has experienced more than ten fold increase (0.59 million to 6.4 million) in its total population during the last 100 years, whereas, Kolkata has experienced the lowest increase (less than nine fold) in its total population among the metropolitan cities in the last ten decades.

The maximum growth rate has been noticed during 1941 to 1951, highest in Delhi (90 percent), followed by Mumbai (76 percent), and Chennai (66 percent). However, Kolkata has recorded a comparative lower growth rate (29 percent) during the same period. This was the era of partition in India, when a huge influx of migration has taken place in big cities. After independence, Delhi experienced the highest decadal growth rate (close to 50 percent), in its total population in all the Censuses (1951 to 2001), followed by Mumbai where the growth rate was about 40 percent during those Census years. On the other hand Kolkata experienced continuous declining decadal growth rate from 1951 to 2001. Chennai has experienced a mixed pattern of high and low decadal growth rate during last 50 years.

**Table 2. Population Growth of Million Plus Cities: 1901-2001**

Census Years	Number of million Plus Cities	Population in Million	Percent Increase	Population of Million Cities as Percent of India's	
				Total population in Million	Urban Population in Million
1901	1	1.51	--	0.6	5.8
1911	2	2.76	82.8	1.1	10.7
1921	2	3.13	13.4	1.3	11.1
1931	2	3.41	8.95	1.2	10.2
1941	2	5.31	5.71	1.7	12.0
1951	5	11.75	21.3	3.3	18.8
1961	7	18.10	54.0	4.1	22.9
1971	9	27.83	53.8	5.1	25.5
1981	12	42.12	51.3	5.2	26.4
1991	23	70.67	67.8	8.4	32.5
2001	35	107.88	52.8	10.5	37.8

**Source:** Computed from Censuses of India

Initially, Kolkata was the most populous city of India till 1981, but Mumbai surpassed it in 1991 Census. Again, Delhi is expected to cross the population of Kolkata in the next

Census of 2011, if both cities will experience same pattern of growth rate. Thus, it is evident in Table Number 3, that Mumbai and Delhi metropolis are experiencing profuse growth in their population.

Thus the sharp increase in population in urban India, particularly in the metropolitan cities is particularly due to the scope for commercial activities, and significant job opportunities. Facilities such as health, education, infrastructure, for example roadways, telecommunications, airports, railways and ports are also better in metropolitan regions.

Thus the major changes that have occurred in India's urban scene in the post independence period are:

**Table 3. Growth of the Leading Metropolitan Cities of India: 1901-2001**

Census Years	Mumbai	Growth Rate	Kolkata	Growth Rate	Delhi	Growth Rate	Chennai	Growth Rate	India	Growth Rate
1901	81.3	--	151.0	--	40.6	--	59.4	--	2384	--
1911	101.8	25.2	174.5	15.6	41.4	2.0	60.4	1.7	2521	5.7
1921	124.5	22.3	188.5	8.0	48.8	17.9	62.8	4.0	2513	-0.3
1931	126.8	1.8	213.9	13.5	63.6	30.3	77.5	23.4	2786	11.0
1941	168.6	33.0	362.1	69.3	91.8	44.3	92.1	18.8	3187	14.2
1951	296.7	76.0	467.0	29.0	174.4	90.0	153.1	66.2	3611	13.3
1961	415.2	39.9	598.4	28.1	265.9	52.5	192.4	25.7	4392	21.6
1971	597.1	43.8	742.0	24.0	406.6	52.9	305.8	58.9	5482	24.8
1981	891.7	49.3	919.4	23.9	622.0	53.0	428.9	40.3	6833	24.7
1991	1259.6	41.3	1102.2	19.9	942.1	51.5	542.2	26.4	8463	23.8
2001	1636.8	29.9	1321.7	19.9	1297.1	37.7	642.5	18.5	10270	21.4

**Source: Computed from Census of India**

- Influx of refugees and their settlements, particularly in the urban areas of Northern India;
- Building of new administrative cities, such as Chandigarh, Bhubaneshwar and Gandhinagar;
- Construction of new industrial cities and townships near major cities;
- Rapid growth of metros;
- Stagnation and in some cases, decline of small towns;
- Massive increase in squatters and proliferation of slums in metro-cities and the dramatic changes in the urban-rural fringes
- Deteriorating urban environment – both physical and social; and finally

- Tremendous pressure on urban infrastructure.

Infact, the positive role of urbanization in India, has been often overshadowed by the deterioration in the environment and quality of life in the cities, often caused by the widening gap between demand and supply of services and infrastructure.

## **1.1 Physical Environment**

### **A) Air Quality**

India's urban areas represent complex problems regarding the physical environment. In particular, the quality of the ambient air in these areas have been deteriorating rapidly over the past few decades, due to vehicular, thermal and industrial and domestic emissions. Motor vehicles, which are the main source of vehicular pollution, have been constantly increasing in number particularly since the 1990s (Table 4). Within 10 years from 1990 to 2000 there has been almost a three-fold increase in the number of motor vehicles in India. On an average a 10 percent increase has been found in each year, which is a serious matter regarding air pollution.

Specific case studies reveal that the number of vehicles in Delhi has increased from 1813 thousand in 1991 to 2630 thousand in 1996, a one and half times increase in 6 years followed by Chennai. This is because a lack of sub-urban trains in Delhi, that also has a huge number of commuting population. On the other hand, increase in the number of vehicles was quite less in Mumbai and Kolkata compared to Delhi and Chennai.

**Table 4. Growth in the Number of Motor Vehicles in India, 1999-2000**

Years	Number of Vehicles (in thousands)	Percent Increase
1990	19152	--
1991	21374	11.6
1992	23507	10.0
1993	25505	8.5
1994	27660	8.4
1995	30287	9.5
1996	33850	11.8
1997	37231	10.0
1998	43159	15.9
1999	48240	11.8
2000	53100	10.1

**Source:** Centre for Pollution Control Board, Ministry of Environment and forests, Government of India, New Delhi, 2000

Moreover, over congestion tends to **degrade roads, decrease fuel efficiency**, and exacerbates certain types of **air pollution**. In the industrial areas, fossil fuels, particularly coal, is one of the major sources of energy and contribute to air pollution in the form of **Suspended Particulates**. While large industries are willing to control and monitoring air pollution but small industries lack information, technical expertise to check pollution. Trend analysis predicts a considerable rise in pollutant emissions from **thermal power** as well as **industrial sources** over the next two decades. The urban households generally use LPG while the households of lower income use coal, kerosene and bio-mass fuels, which are highly polluting and due to poor ventilation it deteriorates **indoor air quality** and health.

**Table 5. Growth of Vehicles in Metropolitan Cities: 1991-1996 as on 31<sup>st</sup> March (in 000s)**

Metropolitan Cities	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Mumbai	629	647	546	608	667	724
Kolkata	475	497	517	545	561	588
Delhi	1813	1963	2097	2239	2432	2630
Chennai	544	604	641	689	768	812

Source: transport Research Wing, Motor Transport Statistics of India, 1997, M/o Surface Transport, GOI, New Delhi.

**Vehicular Pollution** – Among all the vehicular emission loads, the amount of carbon monoxide (CO) was found highest, followed by Hydro Carbon and Nitrogen Oxide in all the three metropolitan cities of Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai. The total amount of all type of vehicular emission load was found highest in the atmosphere of Delhi (1046 tonnes per day), followed by Mumbai (660 tonnes per day), and Kolkata (294 tonnes per day). Carbon Monoxide contributed to more than 65 percent in all the three metro cities, which is 651 tonnes per day in Delhi, followed by Mumbai (497 tonnes per day) and Kolkata (188 tonnes per day). The amount of Suspended Particulate Matter (SPM) in the air is highest in Delhi (10.3 tonnes per day), followed by Mumbai (5.6 tonnes per day), and Kolkata (3.3 tonnes per day). Since the number of registered vehicles in Delhi is the highest, the vehicular emission load also substantiates it, as all the elements were found highest in Delhi. The components of the vehicular emission load affect the health of the people and deteriorate the quality of life of the residents of metro cities.

**State of Ambient Air Quality and Air Pollution in Urban Areas** – The most common air pollutants in the urban areas of India are Sulphur Dioxide ( $\text{SO}_2$ ), Nitrogen Dioxides ( $\text{NO}_2$ ) and Suspended Particulate Matter (SPM), (Table 7). In general it has been observed that though the presence of certain pollutants like SPM has been declining in most of the cities of India, but there exists wide differences across different cities.

**Table 6. Estimated Vehicular Emission Load in 1994 (tonnes per day)**

Emission Load	Delhi	Mumbai	Kolkata
Particulates	10.30	5.59	3.25
Sulphur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> )	8.96	4.03	3.65
Nitrogen Oxide (NO <sub>x</sub> )	126.46	70.82	54.69
Hydro Carbons (HC)	249.57	108.20	43.88
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	651.01	496.60	188.24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1046.30</b>	<b>659.57</b>	<b>293.71</b>

Source: Centre for Science and Environment 1996

In fact, Delhi shows an increasing trend, from 390 mg/cu.m (milligram / cubic metre), to 410 mg/cu.m from 1991 to 1995. Again the concentration of SO<sub>2</sub> has decreased in Mumbai but it had registered a decline in Kolkata.

**Table 7: Ambient Air Quality if Four Metropolises of India: 1991-1995**

Metropolitan Cities	Pollutants (mg/cu.m)	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Mumbai	SO <sub>2</sub>	28	18	22	33	31
	NO <sub>2</sub>	29	33	35	34	26
	SPM	244	238	232	231	209
Kolkata	SO <sub>2</sub>	63	36	40	48	35
	NO <sub>2</sub>	40	27	40	34	29
	SPM	391	307	460	375	354
Delhi	SO <sub>2</sub>	20	18	19	25	23
	NO <sub>2</sub>	34	30	30	43	47
	SPM	390	364	424	446	410
Chennai	SO <sub>2</sub>	14	7	14	16	21
	NO <sub>2</sub>	1	3	0	0	0
	SPM	130	74	100	128	127

Source: Anon 1997, Ambient Air Quality Status and Statistics, 1995, NAAQMS/8 1996, Central Pollution Control Board, Delhi.

### B) Water Quality:

**Pollution, Collection and Treatment** – Like air pollution, water pollution is also one of the major problems in the urban areas of India, resulting out of increased human activities and interference with the natural ecosystems. The major water resources of India including both surface and underground resources are not only **diminishing**, but are increasingly getting **polluted** due to human interventions. Wasteful consumption and neglect of conservation of water resources have resulted in the present situation. With rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, huge quantities of waste water enter river. At the same time, the available per capita water resources have declined due to falling groundwater tables associated with indiscriminate use of water. About 84.9 percent of the

urban population of India had access to clean drinking water in 1993, as compared to 69 percent in 1985.

In urban areas, water, to a large extent is treated by municipal authorities before supplying to residential areas. However, most Indian rivers today fall short of **Central Pollution Control Board** standards due to excessive pollution by untreated sewage, and domestic and industrial wastes. Increase in urban population and **changing lifestyles** have also **increased the domestic need** for water. Intense competition among users – industry and domestic sectors – is driving the ground water table lower.

**Table 8. Changing Pattern of Water Quality (1990-2000)**

Cities	Water Quality	pH	DO	BOD	COD	Total Coliform
1. Kolkata	Moderately good	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
2. Delhi	Deteriorated	High	Decreased form 9.1 to 5.5mg/l	High	High	High
3. Hyderabad	Worsened	Worsened	N.A.	Worsened	Worsened	N.A.
4. Ahmedabad	Deteriorated	N.A.	N.A.	Decreased	Decreased	N.A
5. Pune	Moderately good	N.A.	Decreased	High	High	N.A.
6. Kanpur	Improved	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
7 Lucknow	Good	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
8. Patna	No Variation	Permissible	Permissible	Permissible	Permissible	High
9. Ludhiana	Good	Improved	Poor	Improvrd	Improvrd	Improved
10. Agra	Deteriorated	High	High	High	High	permissible
11. Nasik	Good	Permissible	Permissible	High	Permissible	Permissible
12. Jamshedpur	Moderately good	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
13. Asansol	Deteriorated	Permissible	Permissible	Permissible	High	High
14. Allahabad	Good	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
15. Amritsar	Good	Permissible	Permissible	Permissible	Permissible	Permissible
16. Vijaywada	Very Good	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

**Source: Central Pollution Control Board, 1999 -2000**

The quality of ground water is getting severely affected because of the widespread pollution of surface water. Besides, discharge of untreated waste water through bores and leaching from unscientific disposal of solid wastes also contaminates ground water, thereby **reducing the freshwater resources**.

Four physio-chemical and one biological parameter taken into consideration, i.e. pH (acidity-alkalinity), DO (Dissolved Oxygen), BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand), COD (Chemical Oxygen Demand), and TC (Total Coliform) to analyse the surface water quality of 16 major Indian cities, showing the change that has taken place is given in Table 8. Other water pollutants include Water Temperature and Ammonia. The deteriorating ground water quality due to pollution from pesticide leaching and toxic metal leaching from the industrial effluents **have serious health effects** on population.

The volume of domestic waste water generation is highest in the metropolitan city of Mumbai, which is 2228.1 ml/d (million litres/day), followed by Kolkata (1383ml/d), and Delhi (1270ml/d) and the lowest is in Chennai only 276 ml/d. The generation of industrial waste water is also highest in Mumbai. Again, looking at the percentage of waste water collection from the four leading metropolitan cities, Chennai and Mumbai performs better than Delhi and Kolkata. Regarding the treatment of the collected waste water in all the metro cities, the water is disposed only after primary and secondary treatment. Again, the collected wastewater in Mumbai is mainly disposed in the Arabian Sea, and in Kolkata some amount is disposed in the Hugli river and the rest is used in fish farms. However, in Delhi and Chennai, the wastewater is mainly used for agricultural works and the remaining water is disposed in the Yamuna River in Delhi and in the Bay of Bengal in Chennai.

**Table 9. Waste Water Management in Metropolitan Cities of India 1997.**

Metropolitan Cities	Volume of Waste Water Generated (mld)			Waste Water Collected		Capacity (mld)	Treatment		Mode of Disposal
	Domestic	Industrial	Total	Volume (mld)	Percent		Primary	Secondary	
Mumbai	2228.1	227.9	2456.0	2210.0	90.0	109.0	Yes	Yes	Sea
Kolkata	1383.8	48.4	1432.0	1074.9	75.1	--	--	--	Hugli River Fish Farms
Delhi	1270.0	--	1270.0	1016.0	80.0	981.0	Yes	Yes	Agri-culture Yamuna River
Chennai	276.0	--	276.0	257.0	93.1	257.0	Yes	Yes	Agri-culture Sea

Source Control of Urban Pollution Series: Cups/42/1997-98, CPCB, 1997.

### C) Solid Waste Generation

The problem of municipal solid waste management has acquired alarming dimensions in our country especially over the last decade. Previously, waste management was hardly considered as an issue of concern as the waste could be easily disposed off in an environmentally safe manner. However, with time, due to changing lifestyles of people coupled with rapid urbanisation, and industrialisation the waste has not only increased but have become difficult to be managed.

Urban growth, a concomitant of inadequate infrastructural support, is turning India's major cities into waste dumps. The daily per capita generation of MSW (Municipal Solid Waste) in India ranges from about 100g in small towns to 500g in large cities. An estimated 48 million tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste was produced in 1997, e.g. the population of Mumbai increased form around 12.3 m in 1991 to 16.3 m in 2001, a growth of about 32.5 percent while the Municipal waste generation however grew from 3200 tonnes per day to 5355 tonnes per day in the same period, a growth of about 67 percent. This clearly indicates that the growth in Municipal waste generation in the urban centers has outpaced the growth in population in recent years. The reasons for this trend could be the changing life styles, food habits and changes in the standard of living. The per capita waste generation rate has increased from 375g per day to 490 per day during 1971-1997. This increase along with the population increase has tremendously swollen up the figures total waste generation quantum adding to the problems of local governments responsible for managing it. Analysing the data of MSW generated in 35 metro cities between 1994-1995 and from 1999-2000, there has been a 25 percent increase in this time period and Delhi topping the chart with 50 percent increase.

**Table 10: Composition of Solid Wastes in Major Cities: 1997 (in Percent)**

Cities	Non-Biodegradable					Degradable
	Paper	Plastic	Metal	Glass	Ash & earth	
Mumbai	10.00	2.00	3.60	0.20	44.20	40.00
Kolkata	3.18	0.65	0.66	0.38	34.00	47.00
Delhi	6.29	0.85	1.21	0.57	36.00	35.00
Bangalore	4.00	2.00	1.50	1.00	13.50	78.00
Nagpur	1.88	1.35	1.33	1.34	41.42	34.81

**India Development Report: 1997**

The annual solid waste generated in Indian cities has increased from 6 million tones in 1947 to 48 million tones in 1997 and is expected to increase to 300 million tones per annum by 2047 (CPCB, 2000).

Urban municipal waste is a mix of paper, plastic, metal, glass, and organic matter. Specially worrying is the increase in non-biodegradable plastic waste: discarded plastic bags choke drains, prevent smoother grass growth and exacerbate the damage-potential by preventing the bio-degradation of waste packed in them. The organic matter has remained almost static at 41 percent in the past three decades; but the recyclables have increased from 9.56 to 17.18 percent. Amongst various recyclables, plastics have had a quantum jump from 0.69 to 3.9 percent; more than a five-fold increase within last 20 years. Disposal is the last stage of the waste management cycle. Pace of industrialisation has resulted in increasing amounts of hazardous wastes every year. In total, at present, around 7.2 million tonnes of hazardous waste is generated in the country of which 1.4 million tonnes is recyclable, 0.1 million tonnes is incinerable and 5.2 m tonnes is destined for disposal of land. (Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2001).

The situation here is also grim in collection and transportation of solid wastes. At present most of the MSW in the country is disposed of **unscientifically**. This has adverse impacts not only on the eco-system but also on the human environment. About 90 percent municipal waste is collected by the civic authorities is dumped in low lying areas outside the city limits which no provision of leaching. Treatment and landfill gas collection and use are not practiced. Heavy metals find their way to the underground water, rendering it unfit for drinking. The landfill gases too escape into the atmosphere adding to the green house emissions and resulting in the loss of utilising the same alternatively, as thermal fuel or for electricity production. The changes in the average waste collection efficiency of the total generation in Indian cities is around 72 percent and 70 percent of Indian cities do not have adequate waste transportation facilities.

In Indian cities, MSW generally remains unmanaged due to various factors—viz. inadequate finances, low political priority, inadequately trained personnel, and the lack of proper disposal sites. As a result, residents are prone to diseases like hepatitis, malaria, dengue fever, elephantiasis, cholera, etc. For the waste that is managed, landfilling is the most commonly utilised method of disposal. However, since this primarily translates to open piles of decaying trash, rather than controlled underground burial, such unscientific

dumping of wastes, poses, a great danger to water resources in the neighbouring areas. The problem is further complicated by the frequent presence of other kinds of wastes, specifically, infectious hospital wastes, slaughter house refuse, and various toxic organic and inorganic materials. All these contaminants find their way into local water bodies and subsequently lead to water pollution.

#### **D) Noise Levels**

Unlike air, water, land /soil pollution, noise as a source of pollution has got attention only recently in India. The main factors contributing to noise pollution are vehicular traffic, industrial activities, various electrical appliances, and sources of entertainment such as musical systems, TVs, public addressal systems etc. It is mostly the people living in metropolitan cities, or other big towns or those working in factories who are victims of noise pollution.

**Table 11: Noise Level in Few Cities of India: 1998**

Cities	Day/Night	Industrial Area	Commercial Area	Residential Area	Silence Zone
Kolkata	Day	78	82	79	79
	Night	67	75	65	65
Mumbai	Day	76	75	70	66
	Night	65	66	62	52
Chennai	Day	71	78	66	63
	Night	66	71	48	49
Bangalore	Day	78	76	67	67
	Night	53	57	50	n.a

Source: Ministry of Environment and Forest (2001)

The menace of noise pollution is prevalent in all the major cities of India. Except for noise pollution, during night time, in industrial zone as most of the industries are closed down during this time, the level of noise far exceeds the standard level in all the other zones of the city and the nuisance is more during the day time and is often at a critical level in residential and silence zones. A study has revealed that noise level in residential, commercial and industrial areas and the silence zones in major cities far exceed the standards prescribed by CPCB. The average noise level is in excess of the recommended level of 55dB. Increase in vehicular traffic, industrialisation and overcrowding of cities is generally attributed for the increase in noise levels.

**The Environment Protection Act (1986)** made a passing reference to noise pollution. Although a notification was further issued in 1989, on Ambient Quality Standards vive versa Noise, but it hardly made any impact on controlling noise pollution.

Fourteen years later, in February 2000, **Ministry of Environment and Forests** formulated the **Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules**. The salient features of these rules are that the State Governments being the implementation authority, should initiate the process of controlling noise pollution by classifying the areas into residential, commercial, industrial and silence zones. The rules further provide that the governments should ensure that the noise levels do not exceed the permissible limits.

## **1.2 Social Environment**

### **A) Urbanisation and Slums –**

The Government of India **Slum Area (Improvement and Clearance) Act of 1954** defines a slum as “any predominantly residential area, in which light or sanitary facilities or any combination of these factors are detrimental to the safety, health or morals”. According to NSS (National Sample Survey), “a slum is a compact settlement with a collection of poorly built tenements, mostly of temporary nature, crowded together, in unhygienic conditions, usually with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities. Such an area is considered as a **Non-Notified Slum** if at least 20 households live in that area. **Notified Slums** are those areas notified as Slums by **Urban Local Bodies** (ULBs) or **development authorities**. The vast majority of the city ward migrants belongs to the working class and finds it difficult to secure accommodation within their means. Therefore they squat on every open space available, nearby their work places and construct huts with cheap temporary building materials. In this way, slums grow in number and population. Total and slum population in India according to size/class of towns during 1991 showed that 41 percent of the total slum population was residing in million plus cities where 27 percent of the total population of India resided. However, cities with population between 0.5 – 1 million have only 9 percent of total slum population, where 20 percent of the total population was residing. Further, cities with population between 0.3 to 0.5 million had only 6 percent of total slum population ; where 19 percent of total population was residing. This shows that cities with population between 0.5 to 1 million and city with population between 0.3 to 0.5 million have very less percentage of slum population whereas million plus cities have more percentage of slum population. It reveals that the opportunity in the medium cities is less than that offered by the million cities.

**Table 12. Total Slum Population in India According to Size Class of Towns -1991**

Size Class /Cities	Number of Cities/Towns	Total Population (in 00000)	Percent to Total Population	Slum Population (in 00000)	Percentage to total Slum Population
More than 1000000	23	710	26.6	189	41.3
500000-1000000	31	215	19.8	43	9.3
300000-499999	39	151	18.9	29	6.3
100000-299999	207	325	16.8	54	11.9
50000-99999	345	236	20.0	47	10.3
Less than 50000	3052	521	18.3	95	20.9
TOTAL	3697	2158	21.2	457	100.0

Source: A Compendium of Indian Slums, 1996, Town and Country Planning Organisation

Therefore, the unskilled population is more attracted towards the million cities and thus joins the slums for their residence. On the other hand, the towns with population less than 50,000 showed little more percentage of total slum population (21 percent) than their share of total population (18 percent). This shows that the poor housing quality in the small towns and also may be because the semi-pucca and kutcha houses may have been identified as slums.

**Table 13. Percentage of Slum Population in the Four Metropolitan Cities of India:  
(1981-2001)**

Metropolitan Cities	1981	1991	2001
Greater Mumbai (UA)	30.8	43.2	48.9
Kolkata (UA)	30.3	36.3	32.6
Delhi Municipal Corp. (UA)	18.0	22.5	18.9
Chennai (U.A.)	13.8	15.3	17.7

Source: Census of India 1981, 1991, 2001.

Slum population is a serious problem of the mega cities of India. A large population of Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi live in slums, despite several Government housing policies. A continuous increase has been found in the percentage of slum population over the last three decades in the four metropolitan cities of India in which Mumbai was the highest. In 1981, 34 percent of the population of Mumbai were residing in slums, and in 2001, nearly half of Mumbai's population (49 percent) were living in slums. However, Kolkata, Delhi, and Chennai had not shown as severe conditions as Mumbai, but Chennai had shown an increase in the slum population over 1991.

Urban slums are marked by deplorable living environment and often marked by a lack of civic amenities and facilities leading to environmental degradation and higher incidences of morbidity.

**Table 14: Living Environment of Urban Households Living in Slums: 2002**

State	% of Households Living in Slums		Mode of Water Access (%)						% With Under - ground Sewage		% Without any Drainage		% Without Latrines	
			NS			NNS								
	NS	NNS	% Tap	% Tube well	% other	% Tap	% Tube well	% Other	NS	NNS	NS	NNS	NS	NNS
J&K	59.6	40.4	100	0	0	98	2	0	0	0	100	100	61	76
Punj	75.6	24.4	43	57	0	0	100	0	34	0	0	95	48	95
Delh	20.5	79.5	100	0	0	71	29	0	0	3	31	24	31	52
Raj	2.2	97.8	100	0	0	27	0	73	0	0	67	98	33	98
UP	50.6	49.4	34	67	0	59	41	0	35	11	1	71	1	51
Bih	37.8	62.2	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	0	34	75	34	100
WB	52.1	47.9	89	11	0	72	18	10	63	23	0	39	0	30
Ori	14.2	85.8	100	0	0	57	44	0	0	0	0	90	100	100
Chat	46.9	53.1	31	69	0	71	25	4	0	0	0	25	69	100
MP	65.7	34.3	68	20	12	75	25	0	24	0	31	38	12	75
Guj	38.7	61.3	33	2	65	74	26	0	83	7	2	73	6	69
Mah	74.7	25.3	95	3	2	91	3	6	34	27	10	23	18	25
AP	85.1	14.9	87	2	11	46	55	0	12	0	21	66	10	68
Kar	65.6	34.4	89	11	0	77	16	7	23	24	36	24	66	53
TN	53.5	46.5	85	0	15	93	3	4	57	11	16	44	15	68
Pond	29.0	71.0	100	0	0	97	3	0	0	7	0	10	29	93
TOT	65.1	34.9	84	10	6	71	22	7	30	15	15	44	17	51

Note: NS- Notified Slum, NNS – Non Notified Slum

Source: NSSO (2003a)

## B) Crime in cities

### Indian Penal Code (IPC) Crimes in Cities

Due to the increasing disparities in the urban areas of India, particularly the million plus cities, urban crime has been on the rampant in most of the areas. The common types are theft of property, crime against women, crime against children, crime against the aged and cyber crimes.

A total of 297679 cognizable crimes under the IPC (Indian Penal Code) were reported from the 35 million plus cities in 2002, (National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2002), as compared to 289775 crimes during 2001, thereby reporting an increase of 2.7 percent compared to the national scenario on a marginal increase of 0.6 percent. The Indian metropolises witnessed an **increase of Murder** (5.9 percent), **attempt to commit murder** (6.2 percent), **dacoity** (37.1), **riots** (1.3) and **dowry deaths** (10.1). In addition, the metropolitan centers, had also contributed to 45.9 percent of the total **Auto thefts** cases in the country, 31.5 percent **cheating cases** and 28.6 percent of **counterfeiting** cases of the nation's total crime.

The cities of Delhi and Mumbai contributed 14.8 percent and 8.8 percent of the total crimes reported from the 35 million plus cities. Ludhiana of Punjab, reported the highest increase of 46.8 percent IPC crimes in 2002, followed by Vadodara of Gujarat (41.0), Vijayawada of Andhra Pradesh (34.9) and Faridabad of Haryana (31.5 percent).

**Table 15: IPC Crime Rate – Metropolitan Cities Vs Parent State**

Sl. No.	City	IPC Crime Rate	
		City	Parent State
1	Agra	425.2	85.5
2	Ahmedabad	320.4	206.0
3	Allahabad	175.0	85.5
4	Amritsar	106.5	116.2
5	Asansol	33.3	72.2
6	Bangalore	512.0	211.8
7	Bhopal	767.4	309.0
8	Chennai	132.7	265.2
9	Coimbatore	223.1	265.2
10	Delhi	345.2	341.6
11	Dhanbad	304.7	114.1
12	Faridabad	408.1	185.5
13	Hyderabad	260.4	186.7
14	Indore	712.9	309.0
15	Jabalpur	603.0	309.0
16	Jaipur	505.9	260.2
17	Jamshedpur	218.2	114.1
18	Kanpur	219.6	75.7
19	Kochi	481.5	322.9
20	Kolkata	80.7	72.2
21	Lucknow	306.7	85.5
22	Ludhiana	376.0	116.2
23	Madurai	308.7	265.2
24	Meerut	200.0	85.5
25	Mumbai	160.5	167.4
26	Nagpur	410.8	167.4
27	Nasik	218.8	167.4
28	Patna	357.4	110.4
29	Pune	226.4	167.4
30	Rajkot	463.5	206.0
31	Surat	148.4	206.0
32	Vadodara	476.9	206.0
33	Varanasi	188.2	85.5
34	Vijaywada	898.4	186.7
35	Visakhapatnam	213.5	186.7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>275.9</b>	<b>169.5</b>

Source: Crime In India, 2002, national Crime records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, GOI.

It has been observed that the IPC crime rate in cities was generally higher than the corresponding crime rate of the domain state. Only in case of Asansol, Amritsar, Chennai, Coimbatore, Mumbai and Surat, the crime rate was lower than the parent state.

### **Crimes under Special and Local Laws (SLL)**

The 35 metropolitan cities reported 1625689 cases of SLL crimes in 2002 compared to 1763759 cases in the previous year. Contrary to the National level increase of 4.9 percent, cities reported a decrease of reported cases of 7.8 percent over 2001.

Despite this, the 35 million plus cities contributed significantly towards the nation's share for cases under **Copyright Act** (36.9 percent), **Indecent Representation of Women Prohibition Act** (22.4 percent), **Immoral Traffic (P) Act** (17.9 percent) and **Arms Act** (19.9 percent). **Ludhiana** reported the highest percentage of 78.2 percent, followed by Varanasi 72.3 percent. In addition, **Kolkata and Vijaywada** also reported much higher incidences of cases under SLL.

### **Cyber Crimes**

In recent years Cyber Crimes have also increased in the Indian Cities. **The Information technology (IT) Act of 2000**, specifies, the criminal acts under the broad head of Cyber Crimes. Of the total 70 cases registered under IT Act 2000, around 47 percent cases pertain to obscene publication and transmission in electronic form. 38 persons were taken in custody for such offences during 2002. Other such cases include hacking, signature fraud, breach of confidentiality etc. The urban centers of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Delhi reported the maximum number of these cases.

## **2. Environmental Infrastructure**

The **escalating demand** for urban basic services and infrastructure in urban centers is resulting in a serious deterioration of service quality across housing, transport, healthcare, power and water, sanitation and education. Benign neglect of urban sprawls by civic authorities has led cities to be vulnerable to natural disasters and disease. The recent Mumbai floods of July 2005, has pointed out unmistakably that infrastructure of cities in India is crying for help.

In recent years the infrastructure required to meet the requirements of the urban dwellers call for huge investments.

### **2.1 Housing and Housing Amenities and Infrastructure**

The urban housing characteristics for entire India and the four leading Metros of Mumbai, Kolkata Delhi and Chennai reveal the following facts. In Mumbai, 34 percent of the households lived in semi-pucca and 3 percent in Kutch houses followed by 33 percent and 9 percent respectively in Chennai. However, in Delhi, 11 percent households resided in semi-pucca

and less than 1 percent in kutch houses. It is a good sign for Kolkata that there were only 5 percent semi-pucca houses and almost negligible kutch houses. This shows that in Mumbai and Chennai housing situation is poorer than Kolkata and Delhi.

On the other hand, the houses in these metros are very much **over crowded**. More than 3 persons residing in a single room, is the condition of 56 percent of the population of Mumbai followed by 43 percent population of Kolkata, 30 percent population of Chennai and 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the population of Delhi. Further, 5 and more persons residing in a room, such miserable conditions was faced by 28 percent population of Mumbai, followed by 17 percent of the population of Kolkata and about 10 percent population of Delhi and Chennai both.

Looking at the sanitation condition of the metro-cities, it is apparent that almost universal flush toilet facility is available in Mumbai, followed by 90 percent in Kolkata and 89 percent in Delhi. However, the matter of fact is that more than half of this facility in Mumbai is available in public place and not within housing premises. Kolkata and Delhi might have the similar situation. Again, it is unfortunate to note that about 9 percent population of Kolkata Delhi uses pit toilet. Further, what is worse is that 9 percent of Chennai's population does not have toilet facility at all, followed by 6 percent in Delhi. This shows the inadequate planning of Municipal Corporations because of unprecedented population pressure.

As regard to the sources of safe drinking water, the situation is the best in Mumbai, where almost the entire population has access to piped drinking water. However, a substantial population is dependent on hand pump in Kolkata (35 percent), followed by Chennai (31 percent) and Delhi (13 percent). On the other hand, in Chennai 6 percent of the population is dependent on the sources other than hand pump and tapped/piped water.

Considering the methods of purification of drinking water, it is very strange that half of the urban population in India does not purify drinking water at all. In Kolkata 3/4<sup>th</sup> population do not purify drinking water followed by 62 percent of the population of Delhi. However, the situation is slightly better in Mumbai and Chennai, where 27 percent and 43 percent population respectively do not purify drinking water. But at the same time, majority of Mumbai's population purify drinking water by straining only. The situation reveals the danger of water-borne diseases. This may cause **serious health problems** especially to the slum dwellers and low-income groups, and that too mostly among the children and infants.

**Table 16: Housing Characteristics of Four Leading Metropolitan Cities and Urban India:  
1988-99 (in percentage)**

Household Characteristics	Mumbai	Kolkata	Delhi	Chennai	All India Urban
<b>Type of House</b>					
Pucca	62.8	94.1	88.2	57.5	66.0
Semi-Pucca	34.1	5.2	10.7	32.8	24.4
Kutcha	2.8	0.2	0.9	9.2	9.4
<b>Sanitation Facilities</b>					
Flush Toilet	97.4	89.5	85.5	89.1	63.9
Owned Flush Toilet	29.4	--	--	--	--
Shared Flush Toilet	15.2	--	--	--	--
Public Flush Toilet	52.8	--	--	--	--
Pit Toilet	0.1	8.9	8.9	1.6	16.8
No Facility	2.5	1.6	5.6	9.3	19.3
<b>Sources of Drinking Water</b>					
Piped	99.6	64.0	86.7	63.3	74.5
Hand Pump	0.2	34.5	12.0	30.6	18.1
Others	0.2	1.5	1.3	6.1	7.4
<b>Methods of Purifying Drinking Water</b>					
Straining	54.1	1.0	3.9	14.7	25.1
Water Filter	10.2	17.0	18.8	15.1	14.8
Boiling	18.2	5.7	14.4	38.2	13.6
Electronic Purification	2.5	2.7	3.8	3.0	1.2
Other Methods	0.7	1.5	1.0	0.7	2.0
No Purification	27.1	74.2	62.4	42.8	50.4
<b>Electricity</b>					
Yes	99.5	93.8	97.7	89.6	91.3
No	0.5	6.2	2.3	10.4	8.7
<b>Main Type of Fuel used for Cooking</b>					
Kerosene	39.5	50.3	16.3	54.0	21.5
LPG	58.9	39.9	17.0	37.3	46.9
Bio-Mass and Others	1.4	14.6	3.7	8.7	31.65
<b>Persons Per Room</b>					
Less than 3	43.9	57.4	75.2	69.9	68.6
3-4	27.6	25.3	15.1	19.8	19.5
5-6	20.1	11.9	6.7	8.8	8.3
7 and Above	8.3	5.5	3.0	1.1	3.5

Electricity facility is almost universal to Mumbai's population whereas 10 percent population of Chennai and 6 percent population of Kolkata do not have electricity facility. Main type of fuel used for cooking in urban India is LPG followed by bio-mass fuel and kerosene. However, in Kolkata and Chennai more than 50 percent population uses kerosene. There is very less percentage (less than 9 percent) of user of Bio-mass fuel and others in all the four metro-cities, except Kolkata, where 15 percent population uses it. This enhances the problem of **indoor air pollution** in the metro-cities.

## 2.2 Energy

The study of energy use in the urban areas is of particular importance in view of the impact of urbanisation on the utilisation of commercial energy resources like coal and oil products. The process of urbanisation leads to the substitution of commercial energy for non-commercial energy in industry, commercial and domestic sectors (the share of consumption of commercial energy carriers by urban areas is about 80 percent whereas that of urban population is only 32 percent). Thus one can relate urban development with increased commercial energy use. Urbanites travel via **energy-intensive transportation modes**. Building infrastructure in urban areas to support the high population density requires significant quantity of energy. Also in an urban environment, land use pattern, spatial structures, industrial location etc. affect the levels of energy consumption.

The changes in life style of urban people in recent years have contributed significantly to differences in energy-utilisation levels. In the residential sector fuel wood and charcoal stoves have been replaced with kerosene stoves for the urban poor. The propensity to consume more and more electricity is marked by an increase in the usage of air conditioners, desert coolers, refrigerators micro waves, washing machines, electric geysers, electric kettles and a host of domestic electrical gadgets, including, television, music systems, home theaters etc. Scooters and cars are being frequently used even by the middle-income groups.

Due to the increased availability and affordability, the shares of modern carriers like Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and electricity are significantly high in the urban areas. Also urban houses utilise larger quantities of superior energy than rural households. Hence, it is important to assess this problem of relative deprivation, both quantitative and qualitative going beyond final to useful energy. Also, since urban areas consume significant quantities of petroleum products, 2/3rds of which are imported, the issue of energy security should be taken into account, while considering urban energy policies.

The increase in urbanisation levels will have a significant impact on energy markets as well as on the global environment. Since energy production and use is the single most important source of green house gas (GHG) emissions, the pattern of energy utilisation and its environmental impact will strongly influence the look towards the environment in the future. The environmental implications are significantly dependent on the type of energy carrier chosen and hence it is important to restrict the use of commercial sources through efficient utilisation.

**Table 17: Percentage of Urban Households using Particular Energy Carrier, 2000-1**

Energy Carrier	Low Income	Middle Income	High Income	Total
Fuel wood	41.64	12.69	2.52	22.21
LPG	12.58	42.35	64.67	35.53
Dung	3.63	1.52	0.56	2.16
Kerosene	26.38	32.63	20.61	27.02
Others	15.76	10.82	11.65	13.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source CMIE

## 2.3 Transport

Urban transport problems in India are becoming acute mainly because of rapid motorisation. The increasing use of motor vehicles in cities has been rapidly changing the mode-split structure. It has also helped to alter landuse patterns from compact to more dispersed which in turn reinforces the use of personalised motor vehicles. At present motor vehicle ownership in India, including two-wheelers and three-wheelers, is just a little over 40 vehicles per one thousand population. This is low compared to high income countries. During the last decade, motor vehicle ownership in India has expanded at roughly 10 percent a year. But the growth in the metropolitan cities registered over 5 percent a year during the same period; significantly higher than the National Average. This growth pattern is expected to continue with the growth of per capita incomes, especially in urban areas. The growth will also be further reinforced by the Central Government policy of relying on a strong domestic auto market for the development of a viable auto industry.

Motorisation has brought a higher level of mobility to the urban economy, and to high income of the urban population. But its adverse impacts are also substantial-- the most significant of these impacts being **road congestion, air pollution and traffic accidents**. The urban transport scene in India, is typically a high mix of noisy traffic comprising of two-wheelers, three-wheelers, cars, buses and trucks, all fighting for road space. The streets in most Indian cities are old and narrow, occupying only 6 to 10 percent of land area. Growing traffic and limited road space have reduced peak hour speeds to 5 to 10 km and are in the central areas of many major cities.

Indian cities face growing risk of traffic accidents, and are considered to be more accident prone inspite of a relatively lower level of vehicular population. In 1997, the number of accidents in the top 15 metropolitan cities were 75,605 with 6242 fatalities. In the same year, the

Delhi Metropolitan Region where motor vehicle ownership reached 2.8 million recorded over 11000 traffic accidents, 24 percent of which were fatal.

**Table 18: Share of Two-Wheelers and Three-Wheelers - 1997**

Cities	Motor Vehicle Population	Share (in percentage)	
		2- Wheelers	3- Wheelers
Ahmedabad	631,019	77	7
Bangalore	972,375	73	6
Kolkata	587,576	44	2
Delhi	2,847,695	66	3
Cochin	226,185	60	13
Mumbai	796,913	41	12
Hyderabad	769,401	87	7
Jaipur	448,625	74	2
Kanpur	246,801	79	2
Lucknow	330753	80	3
Chennai	889,819	73	4
Nagpur	238,576	78	6
Patna	219,513	69	5
Pune	476,372	74	8
Surat	361,838	85	5

Source CMIE, Infrastructure,2001

## **SECTION III**

### **1. Policy Perspectives on Urban Environment Management**

The following discussion shows that creating **Sustainable Urban Systems** have become a necessity under present day urban problems, related to urban environment and infrastructure. In other words we should not only think about solving the present day urban problems but should make the **cities livable** for the future generations to come. Let us consider certain critical policy links for **Urban Environment Management**.

## Box 1. Critical Policy Links for Urban Environment Management

Urban Environment Management Issues	Underlying Causes	Relevant Policy Reforms
<b>Access to Environmental Infrastructure and Services</b>		
Serviced Land Shelter	Poor functioning of urban land and housing markets: Highly regulated prices, lack of affordable housing for the poor.	Reform property rights; develop mortgage financing; introduce affordable standards and target subsidies to the poor; Reduce unneeded regulations, Governmental regulations and subsidies.
Water supply, sanitation, drainage, solid waste collection and transport	Supply side dominated by government monopoly: prices heavily regulated, heavy subsidies	Introduce pricing and demand management: reconsider subsidies: move towards decentralisation, privatisation and participation.
<b>Pollution from Urban Wastes and Emissions</b>		
Water Pollution	Uncontrolled municipal and industrial discharges; excessive water use and waste generation: failure to link water quantity and quality issues	Introduce water pricing and effluent charges: subsidise sewage treatment: strengthen regulations and capacity for monitoring and enforcement: prepare comprehensive basin plans.
Energy Use and Air Pollution - Ambient air pollution - indoor air pollution	Increased motorisation and transportation congestion: energy supply side dominated by Government monopoly: heavy energy subsidies, household cottage industry use of low quality fuels	Introduce energy and fuel pricing, road charges, emission charges: reduce automobiles subsidies fuel subsidies: integrate transport and landuse planning: promote clean technologies, fuel substitution, and vehicle maintenance.
Solid and hazardous waste management	Poor municipal management: Lack of disposal facilities: inadequate regulation and enforcement	Introduce regulation, licensing and charges: stimulate waste minimisation: strengthen operations: privatise disposal operations
<b>Resource Losses</b>		
Ground water depletion	Unsustainable extraction link to unclear property rights and treatment as free resource	Clarify property rights: introduce extraction charges: rain water harvesting and artificial recharge of ground water in water deficit regions
Land and Ecosystem degradation	Low-income settlements "pushed" onto fragile lands by lack of access to affordable serviced lands; Lack of controls over damaging economic activities	Coordinate land development; remove artificial shortages of land; develop sustainable uses of sensitive areas: monitor enforce landuse controls
Loss of agricultural and historic property	Lack of property rights, regulations enforcement, maintenance; failure to reflect social values in land prices	Introduce tax incentives for preservation; use redevelopment planning, zoning and building codes; develop property rights
<b>Environmental Hazards</b>		
Natural Hazards	Poorly functioning landmarks. Ineffective land policies; poor construction practices,	Enable land markets; provide disincentives to construction practices or occupation of high risk areas, incentives for using disaster-resistant construction techniques;

		disaster preparation plans.
Man-made Hazards	Inadequate regulation and enforcement: low income settlements alongside hazardous activities	Introduce and enforce environmental zoning: formulate urban disaster preparedness plans and strengthen response capacity. Disaster mitigation plans.

Source: Economic Survey of Delhi - 2001-2002

## 2. Urban Governance and Urban Environment: Infrastructure and Services Management

In addition to the ULBs, at the Central level, the **Ministry of Urban Development** and **The Ministry of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation** form the apex authority of the GOI at the National level to formulate policies, sponsor and support programmes, coordinate the activities of various central ministries, state governments and of the nodal authorities and monitor the programmes concerning all issues of urban development and housing.

**The key interventions of the GOI are:**

- National Urban Transport Policy;
- Guidelines for sector reform and public-private partnership in the urban water and sanitation sector;
- Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), such as integrated development of small and medium towns;
- Mega city schemes;
- Special development plan for National Capital Region;
- Accelerated urban water supply programme;
- Low cost sanitation etc.
- Administering fiscal concessions such as tax holidays for integrated urban infrastructure development projects;
- Urban environmental infrastructure schemes such as for solid waste management and urban water supply, tax free status for municipal bonds, etc
- Training and information: by funding a variety of training programmes,
- Creating and disseminating manuals such as the Municipal Solid Waste Planning Manual.

The present form of urban local government owes its genesis to the British rule. The first such body called Municipal Corporation was set up in Madras in 1688, and was followed by the establishment of similar corporations in Bombay and Calcutta in 1762.

Since then, the structure of municipal bodies has remained by and large the same even though the number of urban areas had increased and their problems had become more and more complex. Recent years have witness an increasing interest in and growing consciousness of the need and importance of local self-government as a provider of services to the community as well as an instrument of democratic self –government. The **74<sup>th</sup> CAA, 1992**, proposed to form a uniform structure of Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats in transitional areas.

Urban local bodies are democratic institutions based on the principle of **self-government** and should represent peoples desires and strengths. ULBs offer

- Enhanced opportunities for **people's participation**; local government is closest to the citizens and in the best position both to involve them in the decision making process of improving their living conditions and to make use of their knowledge and capabilities in the promotion of all round development;
- **Bottom-up planning**; and
- **Effective implementation** by enhancing coordination and responsiveness to users

The **74<sup>th</sup> CAA** seeks to introduce fundamental changes in urban local bodies. Its salient features are:

- Introduction of **12<sup>th</sup> Schedule**, which lists the functions of ULBs, covering planning, regulation and development aspects;
- Establishment of **district and metropolitan planning** responsible for election of representatives for the preparation of development plans at district and metropolitan levels;
- Proposed establishment of **ward committees** in areas having a population over 300000;
- Specification by law of the powers and responsibilities;
- Entrusted to municipalities and ward committees;
- Holding of periodic and timely elections;
- Specifying by law the sources of **municipal finance** and their periodic review;
- Restrictions on the power of the state governments to do away with the democratically elected state governments;
- Reservation of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of seats for women and weaker sections for municipal bodies.

In the face of service challenges, there have arisen **certain roadblocks undermining the reform initiatives**. The ULBs have been confronting **several problems** and there also seems to be a discontinuity between their revenue collection and service delivery outcomes.

The GOI has also begun to respond to the magnitude of challenges facing urban service provision in India. For the cities of India to realize their full potential and become **true engines of growth**, it is necessary that focused attention be given to the improvement of **infrastructure** therein. For achieving this objective **a mission mode approach** is essential. Accordingly, the Prime Minister of India has launched a mission **Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2005**. The mission comprises two submissions – 1) For **Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP)** and the other for 2)**Infrastructure and Governance**.

The **JNNURM** will be implemented in select **63 cities** the duration of the mission is for seven years beginning with the year 2005-06.

For other cities/towns two schemes, viz, **Integrated Housing and Slum Development (IHSDP)** and **Urban Infrastructure Development for Small and Medium Towns** have also been launched along with JNNURM on 3.12.2005. The existing Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY) and the discontinued National Slum Development Programme (NSDP) are subsumed in the IHSDP. The IHSDP implemented by the Ministry of UEPAs has been launched with the objective to strive for holistic slum development with the healthily and enabling urban environment by providing adequate shelter and basic infrastructure facilities to the slum dwellers of identified urban areas.

## **Section IV**

### **Conclusion**

On India's onward path to economic development, it is quite inevitable that urbanisation in India would continue for years to come. The unintended cost of increasing urbanization is deterioration in the environmental quality and a pressure on the existing infrastructure, reinforcing a further degradation of the environment. However, environmental degradation is a manifestation of not only urban population pressure but also the changing life styles, which often accompany a rise in income levels of a segment of the population. On the other hand increasing disparities result in impoverishment of the urban poor that also results in deterioration of the urban environment. Today, various interlinked issues are to be addressed on both the environmental and infrastructural front. Features such as neglect of proper disposal of refuse by

households, industry and service providers such as hospitals, and water services have resulted in environmental deterioration. Intermittent piped water supply and ineffective treatment of waste water and industrial waste are resulting in a host of problems including contamination of water bodies and land. Increased motorised transport, unavailability of more road space in not only creating air pollution but increasing the number of accidents and other human miseries. Widening disparities among urban social groups have resulted in deterioration of the urban social environment and increase in crime rates particularly in the big cities.

Urban local bodies, which are entrusted with environmental protection and provision of urban basic services, are often strapped for adequate financial resources as well as knowledge of environmental management. In recent years, however the situation is not as grim as perceived. Supreme Court intervention in limiting air pollution generated by public transport and government initiatives in using green fuels have improved air quality perceptible in some cities. Today thoughts are being made to meet the energy requirements in a sustainable fashion, through the Energy Master Plan (EMP) and this should be integrated with the civil master plan so that the problems arising out of the urban sprawl and multiplication of urban activities are minimized. Awareness about **sustainable development** which includes environmental concerns is gaining grounds and various tools such as **ecological foot printing** and **green accounting** are being developed to ensure the quality of environment that we leave for our next generation is better than that we inherited from the past.

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## **Unit 25**

# **Local Self Government and the Emergence of Voluntary Organisation**

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### **Contents**

- 25.1 Introduction
- 25.2 Local Government: Few Definitions
- 25.3 Distinction Between Local Government and Local Self-government
- 25.4 Evolution of Urban Local Government in India
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- 25.7 Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC)
- 25.8 Suggestions for Improvement in the Functioning of Local Administration
- 25.9 Emergence of the Voluntary Organisations
- 25.10 Conclusion
- 25.11 Further Reading

### **Learning Objectives**

A study of this unit will enable you to:

- define the institution of local government
- distinguish between local government and local self-government
- discuss the evolution of urban local government in India
- describe the Nagarpalika Bill, 1989
- explain the different functions of the municipalities
- describe the Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC)
- discuss the suggestions the improvement in functioning of Local Administration; and
- describe the emergence of the voluntary Organisations in India.

### **25.1 Introduction**

The present unit focusses on the concept of local self government particularly the urban local self government. It also throws light on the emergence and function of the voluntary organisation in the context of rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. The importance of the urban local governments in India has considerably increased in post independent era

with the inauguration of the Constitution embodying the principle of democracy and a welfare state and emphasizing upon the governments in urban areas to promote social and economic development. In this unit a brief sketch of the emergence of the urban local bodies (ULBs) is being traced, taking into account the pre-independence period and the post independence developments in this field. There is also a brief explanation of the Nagarpalika bill and the new approaches to the local self governments in India in the period of rapid urbanisation. The types of urban local bodies have been discussed in details and their significance and mode of functioning has been discussed in this unit. At the end of the discussion some important suggestions have been put forth for the improvement of the local bodies in the changed circumstances.

The voluntary organisations take part in the new initiatives in the field of the development and progress in the field of civil society. They play an important role in this regard.their role does not end with the creation of awareness among the people and capacity building in them but is redefined in order to pass on institutional learning both inter group and intra-group,thus becoming a core of learning for newer groups. Thus this unit concludes with the fact that the local government and the role of voluntary organisations are closely linked with each other.

## **25.2 Local Government: Few Definitions**

Local governments have been defined in numerous ways. According to the Encyclopedia Britanicca “an authority to determine and execute measures within a restricted area inside and smaller than the whole state. The variant local-self government is important for its emphasis on the freedom to decide the act.” According to P.Stones “local government is that part of the government of a country which deals with the people in a particular locality.” According to L.Golding “local government is the management of their own affairs by the people of a locality”. A more appropriate definition of local government has been given by K. Venkatarangaiya. To him, “local government is the administration of a locality-a village, a city or any other area smaller than the state-by a body representing the local inhabitants, possessing a fairly large amount of autonomy, raising at least a part of its revenue through local taxation and spending its income on services

which are regarded as local and therefore distinct from state and central services. Professor W.A Robson opines that the local government may be said to involve the conception of a territorial, non-sovereign community possessing the legal rights and the necessary organization to regulate its own affairs. Thus the essential characteristics of a local government are:

**i) Local area**

It is a well defined area which is fixed by the respective state government. This area can be termed as a city, town, or a village.

**ii) Local authority**

The administration of a particular locality is run by an authority or body of persons who are elected directly by the people in that particular area.

**iii) Civic amenities for local inhabitants**

The primary objective of the local government is to provide certain civic amenities to the people at their door step. These services are specifically meant for those inhabitants who are living in that restricted area for which the local government unit has been created.

**iv) Local finance**

Normally the local governments raise their finances locally and through several grants given by central and the respective state governments. The local government raises the finance by tax which is being paid by the residents of that particular area.

**v) Local autonomy**

Local autonomy means the freedom of the local bodies in discharge of their duties. It implies the legal rights of the inhabitants of a local area to choose their representatives to govern the particular area, according to legal laws framed by the local council, and to adopt the budget subject to law. But it should be clear that the authorities which have been given the responsibility to run the local government are neither sovereign nor self created entities and they will have to depend upon the higher level of government for their creation, rank, powers and functions.

**vi) Local participation**

The local government should encourage the local people to participate in the local developmental programmes. The local participation is a must for the success of any development programme or policies.

**vii) Local leadership**

A strong leadership is a prerequisite for a local government success. This leadership is provided to the people from the local area in the shape of elected representatives and elected office bearers of the elected councils in regard to the policies and programmes of the government.

**viii) Local accountability.**

Local government units are directly accountable to the local people. The citizen of the local area keeps a close watch on the local authorities to ensure effective performance in their functions.

**ix) Local development.**

Local government is concerned with the overall development of the people living in a particular area or the area itself. Every activity of local government unit is an approach to development.

### **25.3 Distinction Between Local Government and Local- Self Government**

Local government and local self government are interchangeably used. The term local self government is used in those countries which were under the colonial rule. After India got independence, it used only the local government instead of local self government because the entire country is ruled by the people not only local government. That is why the term local government instead of local self government is used in Entry 5 of list II of the seventh schedule of our Constitution. Despite this distinction, both the terms continue to be in vogue in our country. The term signifies a government, representative of local inhabitants, more or less autonomous in character, instituted under state legislation, in a village, a district, a city or in urban areas to administer services as distinguished from state and central services.

The urban local government is that part of the local government which deals exclusively with the urban affairs. The urban scenario in India is very complex and complicated one. And this complexity poses enormous challenges to the administrative system involved in managing regulatory as well as developmental affairs in urban areas. The scope of urban local governments extends to the study of the phenomenon of urbanisation and its problems, urban planning, structure of urban governments and their classifications, municipal legislation, personnel management, financial administration, special purpose agencies and organisation and functions of union ministry of urban development and its sub-ordinate and attached offices etc. The significance of urban local government lies in the numerous benefits that it bestows upon the inhabitants of the area it operates in. It functions as a school for democracy wherein citizens are imparted political and popular education regarding issues of local and national importance. It develops qualities of initiative, tolerance and compromise- so essential for the working of a democracy. The importance of the urban local governments in India has considerably increased in post independent era with the framing of the Constitution embodying the principle of democracy and a welfare state and emphasizing upon the governments in urban areas to promote social and economic development.

#### **Reflection and Action 25.1**

Visit the local administrative office in your city/ town/ village. Interview at best two officers of this administration about the structure and functioning of this office. What roles it performs and how far are they able to serve the people in general.

Write a note on “The Administration Process in my City (Ward or municipal office etc.)/ town/ village” in about two pages. Share your note with other learners at your study center.

### **25.4 Evolution of Urban Local Government in India**

#### **British phase**

The first sign of urban local government can be traced to 1687, with the establishment of Madras Municipal Corporation. Later the Royal charter of 1720 established a

Mayor's court in each of the three presidencies Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. In 1850, an act was passed for the whole of British India permitting the formation of local committees to make better provisions for public health. Lord Mayo's resolution of 1870 made arrangements for strengthening the municipal institutions and increasing the associations of Indians in these bodies. But it was the resolution of Lord Ripon of 18<sup>th</sup> May 1882 that was hailed as the Magna Carta of local government and he suggested reforms for instilling life into the local bodies. He can be termed as the father of the urban local self government in India. But one thing was clear that the development of the local self government was done to primarily serve the British interests rather than to promote self-governing bodies in the country; that local government institutions were dominated by the British and most of the Indian population remained deprived of the participation in their functioning; that the dominant motive behind the institution of local government in India was to give relief to the imperial finances.

A significant development since Ripon's resolution came up in 1907 when the rising discontent among the Indian masses led to the appointment of the Royal commission on decentralisation, to enquire into the financial and administrative relations of the government of India and the provincial governments and the authorities subordinate to them. In order to increase the devolution of power and gradual democratisation of the local bodies the commission had recommended that the chairman should be elective non-official and the majority of the members should be elected non-officials. The other recommendations were that the municipalities should be given more powers of taxation and control over their budgets. Apart from these the large municipalities should be endowed with greater power and required to appoint qualified health officials along with the executive officials.

The act provided for the reduction of official control over municipal bodies; the provincial governments could introduce the election system in any municipalities and permit the election of non-official chairman. The government of India act 1919 introduced the system of diarchy and the local self government became a transferred

subject under the charge of a popular minister of the provincial legislature. The act increased the taxation powers of the local bodies, lowered the franchise, reduced the nominated elements and extended the communal electorate to a large number of municipalities. Lastly, the government of India act 1935, which emphasized provincial autonomy, again declared local government as a provincial subject. The act earmarked no taxes for local bodies. The municipal institutions were to be revitalized with the introduction of popular ministries. However due to the outbreak of World War II, little progress could be made in this direction. The act of 1935 abolished the system of diarchy and introduced popular governments in the provinces. The British left in 1947 without firmly establishing a self-reliant, vibrant, healthy and efficient system of municipal government.

### **The post independent period**

After independence, on 26 January the constitution of India came into force. In reference to urban self government Entry 5 of the list II of the seventh schedule, viz. the state list says, local government, that is to say, the Constitution and powers of municipal corporations, improvement trusts, District boards, mining settlements authorities and other local authorities for the purpose of local self-government or village administration. Entry 20 of the concurrent list reads “economic and social planning.”

The most important landmark in the evolution of urban local government in the post-independent India is the setting up of Ministry of Urban Development in 1985. Earlier the urban local government was the responsibility of the ministry of health as local government had its beginning in its urge to improve sanitary conditions as recommended by the Royal Army Sanitation Commission (1863). The ministry of health looked after both rural and urban government until 1958 when the former was separated from it and put under the charge of Ministry of Community Development. In 1966, a part of local government namely urban development was made the responsibility of the Ministry of Works and Housing which was renamed the Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development. In 1967, the subject of Urban Development was transferred to the Ministry of Health, which was designated as

Ministry of Health, Family Planning, Works, Housing and Urban Development. In 1985 on realizing the magnitude of urban problems resulting from urbanization taking place at alarming pace in the country that the Government of India decided to set up a separate ministry of Urban Development and entrusted it the responsibility of broad policy formulation and monitoring programmes in the areas of housing, urban development, urban poverty alleviation, urban water supply, and urban transport in addition to construction and maintenance of central government buildings and management of central government land and property.

In August 1988, the Government set up the National Commission on Urbanization (NCU), it subsequently recommended the following measures:

- i) The ministry of Urban development to be restructured to make it the nodal ministry to deal with urbanisation.
- ii) A national urbanisation council (NUC) is set up to formulate urbanisation policies and monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policies.
- iii) An Indian Council for Citizens Action (ICCA) be created to encourage citizens through organised voluntary efforts.
- iv) Every town, with a population of more than 50,000, be provided with an urban community department, through which development programmes be implemented.

### **25.5 Nagarpalika Bill, 1989**

The government has introduced the nagarpalika bill in august, 1989 with a view to give power to the people and to strengthen, revamp and rejuvenate urban local governments. Its main provision were the constitution of Nagar Panchayats for areas in transition from rural to urban areas, ward committees in nagarpalikas and zonal committees in maha nagarpalikas, reservations for scheduled castes/scheduled tribes and women, finance commission to recommend the principles to ensure soundness of local bodies finances, conduct of elections by central election commission, audit of accounts by the comptroller and auditor general of India and above all, the grant of constitutional status to local bodies. In this bill, mainly three types of nagarpalikas

were envisaged; (i) nagar panchayat for a population of 10,000-20,000, (ii) municipal council for urban areas with a population between 20,000-3,00,000 and (iii) municipal corporation for urban areas with a population exceeding 3,00,000. The bill was passed by Lok Sabha but it was defeated in the Rajya Sabha by a narrow margin of three votes.

Again in 1991, when congress ministry came into power, it introduced the bill with slight modifications. It was passed by both houses of Parliament in December 1992. Later on it came into existence as the constitution 74<sup>th</sup> amendment act, 1992. The act introduces a new part, namely, part IX A, in the Constitution. This part deals with issues relating to municipalities such as their structure and composition, reservation of seats, elections, powers and functions, finances, and some miscellaneous provisions. The 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment thus gives a constitutional status to the municipalities.

To conclude It may be observed that the evolution of urban local government in the post independent India has been characterised by the inertia on the part of the central governments and the state governments as is evidenced by the sporadic and piecemeal efforts made by them in realising and recognising the significance of the city governments and taking half hearted measures in improving their organisation and functioning. It was only during 1980s that the central government took decision of setting-up of the Ministry of Urban Development, appointment of national commission of urbanisation and introducing nagarpalika bill in 1989 and 1991 to rejuvenate the urban self government institutions in the country.

The following types of urban bodies are constituted for the urban administration in India.

- i) Municipal Corporation
- ii) Municipal Council/Committee/Municipality.
- iii) Notified area Committee.
- iv) Town Area Committee.
- v) Township.
- vi) Cantonment Board and Special Purpose Agency/Authority.

Municipal corporations are set-up in big and large cities. The council of the corporation is headed by a Mayor and its standing committees constitute the deliberative wing which takes decisions. The Municipal Commissioner the executive authority, responsible for enforcing these decisions. Collectively, headed by the Mayor, the standing committees and the Municipal Commissioner make up the corporation. The council of the corporation consists of councillors who function for a period of five years. The Municipal Commissioner of corporation is at the apex of the municipal hierarchy and is the key officer controlling the administrative machinery of the corporation. He is appointed by the state government. Generally officers belonging to the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) are appointed to this post. The traditional civic functions are performed by the municipal bodies.

The municipal council is a statutory body created by an act of the state legislature and the criteria of setting it up varies from state to state. A municipal council consists of elected, coopted and associate members. The council elects from amongst its members,a president for a period of five years. He/She can be removed by the council as well as the state government. The council also elects one or two vice-presidents. The president is the administrative head and he normally presides over the meeting of the council, guides the deliberations and gets the decisions implemented. The state government also appoints the executive officer in the municipal council for the conduct of the general administrative works. He exercises general control and supervision over the municipal office, can transfer clerical employees, prepare the municipal budgets, keeps an eye on the expenditure, is responsible for the collection of the taxes and fees and takes measures for recovering the arrears and dues. He can be removed by the council or by the state government. Normally the functions of the council are similar to those of the municipal corporations.

The notified area committee is set up in those areas which are not yet ready for declaring themselves as the municipalities. It is normally created in the areas which are rapidly growing with large and heavy industrialisation. The state government constitutes a committee called as Notified Area Committee. This committee

administers this area. Except three members who are elected, all the members are normally appointed by the state government. The chairman is also appointed by the state government.

Town area committee can be termed as the semi-municipal authority. They are constituted for the smaller towns. The town area committee is constituted by an act of state legislature and its composition and functions are specified in it. The committee may be partly nominated or partly elected or wholly elected or wholly nominated.

When, in an area, large public enterprises are set-up, several residential colonies also come into existence. For example, the steel plants of Rourkela, Bhilai, and Jamshedpur etc. consequently administer such a township the municipal council or the corporations in which these areas falls appoint a Town Administrator, who is assisted by a few engineers and technicians. The townships are well planned and contains several facilities like water, electricity, roads, drainage etc. The expenditure on these services are shared by the industries concerned.

Cantonment Boards are the only bodies which are controlled by the Central government by the Defense Ministry. These are set-up when a military station is established in a new area. With the establishment of the cantonment area several civilian areas like shops and market and the inhabitants of these markets constitute a sizable population. The officer commanding the station is the president of the board. An elected member holds office for the period of three years, while the nominated members continue as long as they hold the office in that station.

Apart from the municipalities and corporations there are other single purpose agencies which are set-up as statutory bodies under separate acts of the respective state governments. The single purpose agencies are housing boards and improvement trusts. To deal with the problem of housing the housing boards are set-up in almost every state. At the central level, the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) plays a crucial role. It has promoted numerous houses in the country. Most

of them are for the members of the lower income groups people. The housing boards receive the funds from central and the state government for the promotion of different housing schemes. These boards generally analyse the problem of housing and they usually give advice to the government regarding the improvement of the housing problems. They also create the planned neighbourhood with the construction of the houses at reasonable cost. However, the housing boards are not exclusively for poor income groups rather they also plan for the housing of the higher income group, yet their most important contribution has been in serving the middle income groups. Besides, a number of well integrated colonies have been developed by the housing boards.

To promote the development of a city the improvement trusts are constituted. They are the statutory bodies. Normally, it is the new areas of a city which falls under the improvement trusts. The power and functions of the improvement trusts are specified in the act by which they are created. Hence there are inter-state variation in the composition and functioning of the improvement trusts. Generally, an improvement trust is headed by a chairman, who is a nominee of the state government. An improvement trust is a multi-functional development agency, which performs an important coordinative role by bringing the representatives of a large number of government agencies engaged in the process of development under one roof. An example of the improvement trust is Delhi Development Agency (DDA), which was set up in 1957.

## **25.6 Functions of the Municipalities**

The List of Functions that has been laid down in the twelfth schedule is as follows:

- i) urban planning, including town planning
- ii) Regulation of land use and construction of buildings.
- iii) Planning for economic and social development.
- iv) Roads and bridges.
- v) Water supply for domestic, industrial and commercial purposes.
- vi) Public health, sanitation, conservancy and solid waste management.
- vii) Fire services.

- viii) Urban forestry, protection of the environment and promotion of ecological aspects.
- ix) Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded.
- x) Slum improvement and up gradation.
- xi) Urban poverty alleviation.
- xii) Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks, gardens and playgrounds.
- xiii) Promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects.
- xiv) Burial and burial grounds and electric crematoriums.
- xv) Cattle ponds, prevention of cruelty to animals.
- xvi) Vital statistics including registration of births and deaths.
- xvii) Public amenities, including street lighting, parking lots, bus stops and public conveniences.
- xviii) Regulation of slaughter houses and tanneries.

## **25.7 Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC)**

The Metropolitan Planning Committee came into existence with the introduction of the 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment which provides that in every metropolitan area, a Metropolitan Planning Committee should be constituted for preparing a draft development plan for the metropolitan area as a whole. It also laid down that in this sort of committee not less than two third of its members shall be elected by and from amongst the elected members of the municipalities of that particular area. While preparing the draft development plan the following factors will be taken into account

- i) The plans will be prepared by the municipalities and the panchayats in the metropolitan area.
- ii) Matters of common interest between the two.
- iii) Sharing of water and other physical and natural resources.
- iv) Integrated development of infrastructure and environmental conservation.

- v) Overall objectives and priorities set-up by the government of India and the state government.
- vi) Other available resources, financial and otherwise.

However, despite a rapid growth of urban local bodies after the attainment of independence general impression is that the urban local bodies in India have failed to come up to the people's expectations. The importance of urban local bodies is very crucial in our democratic set-up. Local urban bodies form a substantial step towards centralization of power and promotion of democratic values. The local bodies are the instruments of cultural and social change in India. They are more effective instruments of social change because they inculcate the civic sense and the neighbourhood consciousness among the urbanites. Despite there has been an imbalance between the peoples aspirations and needs on the one hand and the actual conduct of the municipal administration on the other hand. The shortage of finances added to the gravity of the problem. Non utilization of available resources properly also made things worse. Rapid urbanization and the emergence of developmental tasks necessitated high degree of administrative and technical skills. There is a great need for larger financial devolution to urban authorities. The system of municipal finance suffers from serious flaws. The system of accounting, as prescribed by the state government is not followed strictly, leading to embezzlement, leakages and under assessment. In various municipalities, audit objections remain pending for many years and in some municipalities audit is not even conducted on a regular basis.

Due to excessive control over the urban local bodies, their performance suffers. To ensure proper performance of their functions, the state government exercise legislative, administrative, financial and judicial control. These controls, instead of providing guidance and support, the control turns out to be negative, restricting the functioning of these bodies. Apart from the control another reason for the failure of the urban local bodies is due to the postponement of the elections of the local bodies like municipalities etc. The state government feel it safer and easier to deal with bureaucracy placed at the helm of the civic administration than with the popularly

elected councilors and corporators. The shifting of the large rural masses to the urban areas for jobs led to several problems such as the unplanned growth of towns and cities. In the absence of the proper planning, judicious use of land is not being made, colonies are set-up without proper facilities such as schools, parks and hospitals, the growth of slums is not checked, there is shortage of houses, traffic congestion is rampant and hardly any effective steps are taken to check urban poverty and unemployment.

Due to the lack of awareness in public, public participation in urban bodies has been negligible. The population of the cities consists of heterogeneous groups and they are alienated from one another. Most of the city population was once rural and even now, it looks at the city merely as a place to earn a livelihood, and has little attachment with it. While one understands the reason behind the low participation of the rural population in the management of their politico-administrative institutions, it is difficult to appreciate a similar, if not identical, phenomenon in the urban areas. The urban leadership also fails to inspire any confidence among the people and once elected they hardly visit their wards to learn about the gravity of the problems of their constituency.

## **25.8 Suggestions for Improvement in the Functioning of Local Administration**

In the decision making process the people participation is a must. Although the local bodies are democratic but most of the essential decisions are done by the bureaucrats and other government officials. The representation of people is a very essential ingredient for the developmental programme to be successful. Side by side the local administration should have the coordination between the municipal government and other public agencies for the successful implementation of the developmental plans and policies. The local administration should also have the political support to obtain funds and access to other resources required for the execution of urban development plans and programmes. The organizational performance must be efficient in the location of the programmes, the timing of activities, the impact of programmes on individual target groups on which projects are to be focussed and the use of resources

and requiring more effective programming in individual cases. The organizational structure should also provide for continuity in administration and have the capacity to overcome major political difficulties associated with the change in the government at the national level affecting inter-governmental relationships. It should be adaptable to shift in priorities and the unforeseeable events in the process of urban development. There is a need for making provisions in the system for monitoring and evaluation of progress and consistent improvements in performance.

The existing urban local government and the development legislation is not only inadequate in the faces of the enormity of task of urban development but far more narrow than the ranges of the legislations considered adequate for the implementation of our urban policy. The current urban legislation is grouped around the land use patterns, development control building codes and by laws, property taxation, environmental control and industrial location legislations. The existing institutional and juridical structures relating to the application of the legislation, requires improvement in administrative procedures, particularly in respect of delays in reviews, development permission, buildings codes and by - laws, land acquisition, land tenure, industrial location, permission for guiding urban development. Since the crux of the urban growth is the change in demographic, social and economic structures, the task of urban local bodies in the field of urban development is to cope with the emerging problems more efficiently with suitable development strategies and minimum of institutional organizational changes in the distribution of assets, including level of education, health and related services. These are prerequisites to bring about changes in the level of income and consumption, where urban poverty is compounded by shortage and scarcity and also by high cost of basic necessities including services. So we can say that the prospects for an effective representative local government are yet to be seen despite the fact that political process and urban development administration are closely related and generally for most of the time dominated by state/or national political system.

## **25.9 Emergence of the Voluntary Organisation**

The problems of urban local government are varied in nature. Some of the urban problems like housing problems, infrastructural facilities, problem of safe drinking water, unemployment, poverty, rise in crime rate, social isolation, old age problems and the neglect of aged population in a city, beggary, individualism and low social cohesion and cooperation between the individuals are glaring. To solve these problems the need of voluntary organization arises. For some years, the voluntary organizations have emerged as an important option for the popular activities, in spite of their limited reach and impact of their programmes. The role of voluntary organization should represent a form of social and economic investment towards achieving equity, social justice and the full democratization of the society. In the context of the above problems in urban areas the role of Non Government Organisations is very crucial.

The voluntary organisations can sensitive the local populace about the existing problems in their respective cities and towns. They can form associations and other smaller groups. Normally the NGOs can act as the sources of various information through various processes to each components of the society. The process of making the people aware and sensitive of their rights and duties is essential for the suitability and transparency of any planning process. The voluntary organisations can impart training to the people of the locality for the solution of various problems which can be solved with the active participation of the people of the concerned locality. Training should provide groups the power to negotiate and formulate plans for their own localities, along with a common knowledge of its effects at a larger level. They can assist in playing an advocacy and pioneering role in the planning and information, education and service delivery or a complementary and supplementary role in policy and programmes.

As our society is getting more and more democratized and the administration is more and more decentralized, the role of voluntary organisations is increasing day by day. To achieve the role of development in this scenario, the voluntary organisations are

expanding their activities, strategic access and use of media and communication as more effective, along with negotiations. The voluntary organisations take a proactive role in implementation of various programmes of urban problem. They advocate with the state and other voluntary organisations to ensure that the commitments are transformed into reality. As an immediate follow-up the strategic plans should be translated into local language and documents disseminated widely to policy-makers, government and other NGOs, the media and the public. It is also essential that the voluntary organisations document the institutional learnings for the use of the interested groups.

The voluntary organizations take part in the new initiatives in the field of the development and other progresses in the field of civil society. They play an important role in this regard. Their role does not end with the creation of awareness among the people and capacity building in them but is redefined in order to pass on institutional learning both inter-group and intra-group, thus becoming a core of learning for newer groups. They advocate for the rights of the marginalized groups of society like poor sections of the lower castes and the handicapped section of the urban areas. They act as the consultant for these groups and they fight for the right cause of these marginalized groups of urban areas. They also complement the lack of technical know how of this section of the society by providing necessary support and explaining the different processes involved if any. They spread the documents on experiences and institutional learning nationally and even globally for easy replication elsewhere. These documents can be used to identify and overcome the problems and also as a base for dealing with governments.

### **Reflection and Action 25.2**

Visit a local NGO in your neighbourhood. Find out about its activities and participation of people in them. Write a note of two pages on the “Native and Activities of an NGO” Compare your note with other students at your study center.

It is very important to develop mechanisms for consultation, negotiation, multilateral accords and coordination among various agents involved, within an institutional framework that respect integral policies, plans and programmes. If these practices are to be legitimized, the validity and representation of the spokespersons of popular organisations must be recognized and their dynamics should be respected. Institutions must be adapted and public servants educated so that they have an open mind to recognise the importance of processes present within the popular neighborhoods of our cities. Citizens and their groups are the stake holders in the urban areas.

Voluntary organisations have emerged as a force in the process of urban development. There is a need to build their own capacities as well as government capacity to perform the roles well and ultimately to learn in the process. The NGO also need to evolve and strengthen the emerging new partnership to make the enabling role of the government in the human settlement sectors a reality in the coming years. Thus the urban locality should be planned in such a way which cares for the marginalised and the vulnerable with compassion and respect for the rights for all. The voluntary organisations thus emerged to promote and encourage the political participation of all the people in the city and conducting its affairs in a transparent and accountable manner. They also emerged due to the social need of the people in an urbanised society.

## **25.8 Conclusion**

The scope of the urban local government is very wide which includes the phenomena of urbanisation itself, urban planning, municipal legislation, personnel management, finances of the urban local bodies and other agencies. The urban local government operates in towns and cities. The chief characteristics of the urban local governments are: that its jurisdiction is limited to the specific area and its functions relate to the provision of civic amenities to the population living in that local areas, it has the power to raise finances by taxation in the areas under its jurisdiction and they act under the general supervision of the particular state and central governments. The urban local governments act as a school to teach democracy to the citizens of the

locality. In other words we can say that the local urban bodies act as the custodians of our democratic culture and ethos. It provides facilities for minimum basic needs of the people. The importance of the urban local government has increased considerably after the independence with the introduction of the notion of the welfare state in our Constitution. Similarly, the Non-government Organisations or NGOs have also emerged to fulfil the needs of the citizens. Through adversary and training the NGOs spread awareness of various kinds in society, in general and urban areas in specific.

### **25.9 Further Reading**

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## **Unit 26**

### **Urban Planning**

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#### **Learning Objectives**

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the nature and scope of urban planning
- describe the historical evolution of urban planning
- discuss the main concerns of urban planning and
- outline the main objectives of the National Urbanization Policy

#### **26.1 Introduction**

The phenomena of urban growth has resulted in an unplanned, haphazard and ugly urban settlements. Planning is therefore necessary to combat the menace of urbanisation and its resultant problems. An important function of planning in purely physical terms is the judicious use of land- a scarce commodity in most urban areas, and its rational and timely reservation for future use. Land planning is thus a very essential need. The state governments have therefore to legalise upon planning and to ensure its implementation which is ultimately the responsibility of the urban governments. The state governments have set-up departments of town and country planning for this purpose. In this unit you will learn all about the process of planning for a better future; especially in the urban areas.

## **26.2 Urban Planning: Nature and Scope**

Planning is a preparation for future action. It is a conscious process of selecting and developing the best course of action to accomplish a definite objective. Urban planning is a process by which the use of land is controlled and its development is regulated in public interest. It involves both engineering and architectural problems. The urban planning is a technique and method of development that contribute to the organisation, development and evolution of urban areas. It contributes to their urbanizing environs, based on economic, legal and aesthetic concepts and conditions in order to promote the welfare of the public and the quality of the environment. It deals with the spatial incidence of socio-economic development over an urban space. As Lewis Mumford defines:

“City planning involves the consideration of human activities in time and space, on the basis of the known facts about place ,work and people. It involves the modification and relocation of various elements of the total environment for the purpose of increasing their services to the community, and it calls for the building of appropriate structure, dwellings, industrial plants, markets, water works, dams, bridges, villages, cities to house the activities of a community, to assist the performance of all its needful functions in a timely and orderly fashion.”

Planning has both social and economic aims; socially successful planning tends to make people's life happier, facilitates social intercourse, and has visual attractiveness. A proper spatial relationship between the communities in a region and the constituent parts of a town, compactness of development and an efficient arrangement of communication routes-all results in human activities being carried out on more efficiently and less wastefully and thus create wealth.

In a town or city there are large numbers of activities going on whether somebody directs them or not. Houses are constructed, shops are opened, markets flourish, schools and hospitals are built, and roads are widened or new roads opened. All these activities will go on whether we have town planning or not. If there is no planning what may happen is that before roads are built houses may be constructed and houses may be occupied before water supply and drainage facilities are provided. Urban planning and town planning

considers each one of these improvements and relates them to the community and the city as a whole, to see what is likely to happen not only in the immediate future but over a reasonably long period of time.

Actually the urban planning is concerned with the wide range of issues and problems such as the problem of providing the adequate housing facilities, employment, schools, parks and playgrounds, good transportation facilities and utilities and services for the increasing urban population in the large number of towns and cities which exists today and are likely to come up in the future. These problems require constant and continuous planning instead of piecemeal planning at different level.

The urban planning cannot be seen in isolation, rather the problem of urban planning is related with the entire region, and thus there is a need for a regional approach to urban planning. It is equally important to coordinate the growth of rural areas with the future development of towns and cities to form an integral part of a balanced region. Regional approach should attempt to reduce the socio-economic imbalance between the urban and the rural areas and between different parts of the country. This requires taking up of regional development plans along with the preparation of the master plans for towns and cities. Regional and urban planning therefore is closely related with each other. Regional planning basically deals with the physical planning of towns and cities and the countryside. It may be used with reference to an extension of town planning. It may include the general planning of resources.

Patrick Geddes and Lewis Mumford have written about regional planning and development as a prerequisite to any social planning or town planning. The term region applies to an area with certain characteristics, often mere size, by virtue of which it is adopted as a suitable unit for some particular purpose of business and administration. It is also an area which is homogenous with respect to some particular set of associated conditions, whether of the land or of the people such as industry, farming, distribution of population, commerce or the general sphere of influence of a city. A region in general

terms is envisaged as a natural unit in contrast to the artificial unit created for administrative purposes.

A town planner should be an expert in the area of land use planning. He should utilise the minimum extent of land required for expansion of towns and thus preserve valuable land for some other purposes. Here again, a regional study would help the planner regarding his limitations in planning for the development of any town or city in the region. The present day town planner, faced with the problem of expanding our cities for locating additional houses, industries, public buildings and recreational facilities, is at the same time facing problems like shortage of farm land, ill effects of deforestations, ribbon development along highways, imbalance in rural and urban life and so on. He has to approach the problem at the regional basis before going to the expansion of any existing town or city, or building any town in that particular region. Urban planning thus is a very broad concept and includes not only planning of streets, houses and a few civic buildings but if town planning to be effective and creative, has to start from the village and cover the entire country. At the city level the town planner seeks to serve the interest of not only one community or one town but several communities, individually as well as in relation to one another, and utilises the resources of the city to the best advantage of land optimum utilisation by all the communities of that area.

Urban planning takes place within a national framework. Planning gains its power through its embodiment in the legislation and regulations which forms part of the legal apparatus which can vary from country to country. Secondly, the implementation of planning occurs through the administrative system which again varies considerably across different different countries of the world. Urban planning should be not only politically and socio-culturally feasible but it should be environmentally, economically, technologically, physically, fiscally and infrastructure-wise also feasible. Since the city and its environs cannot grow as fast as the growth of the urban population and human activity, urban planning is a must. Congestion and overcrowding of homes, the poverty and unemployment, the high incidence of deviant social behaviour, the growth of sub-

standard settlements and squatter colonies, the shortage of housing, lack of community facilities and public utilities are some of the symptoms of faulty planning in urban areas.

### **26.3 Historical Evolution of Urban Planning**

Human beings have been living on this earth for more than a million years but we trace the history of the cities only since the 5000 or 6000 years ago in the great river valleys of Euphrates, the Indus and the Nile. From the historical facts it is a well known truth that the cities were always planned with a definite purpose in mind. It may be due to self glorification, protection, trade etc, and the development of the city was always done as a separate agency.

In ancient India particularly during the Mauryas and Gupta periods separate urban planning and development agencies existed. The work of urban planning was performed by city council and town council along with the other functions of the state. The city council was modelled upon that of a village panchayat and it may be assumed that it was an elected body, though certain works were reserved for the control of the imperial officers. During the Gupta period, we have found evidence of the existence of town councils and the public was also very vigilant about proper development of the city.

There are quite a number of books written by the ancient authors about town planning in India. They are known as '*Vastu Sastra*.' Earliest examples of Vedic town planning available are Madurai, Srirangam and Kanchipuram, built with the temple as the focal point and concentric square streets all around at some length. One who refers to *Manasara Silpa Sastra* (Architecture by *Manasara*) and *Kautilya Artha Shastra* (Economics by *Kautilya*) can appreciate the scientific approach to town and village planning in ancient India.

*Manasara Shilpa Shastra* is a treatise on town planning and architecture and consists of seventy-five *adhyayas* or chapters. Apart from dealing with details of *Vastu-shilpa*, many of the chapters describe particulars such as design of various parts of the buildings, towers, pillars, chariots, triumphal arches, jewellery, idols of gods and ceremonies connected with the commissioning of the finished structures.

The fourth chapter describes the investigation of the nature of different types of soils by means of several tastes, such as their colour, form, smell, and touch. The seventh chapter deals with the planning of the village according to their suitability for the location of temples, palaces, houses, roads and other depending upon the location of the presiding deity within the village. The ninth chapter describes in detail the different types of village plans according to their parts of the village for temples, schools, public halls and residential houses for different classes of people. The eleventh chapter deals with the formation of the cities, town and fortresses. The characteristics of the cities fit for the habitation of kings, merchants, Brahmins and other classes of people. The following are the different types of town plans evolved and practised according to Manasara.

1. Dandaka
2. Sarvathobhadra
3. Nandyavarta
4. Padmaka
5. Swastika
6. Prastara
7. Karmuka
8. Chaturmukha

Dandaka type of town plan provides for two main entrance gates and is generally adopted for the formation of small towns and villages. The village offices were generally located in the east. The female deity of the village or the *Gandevata* will generally be located outside the village and the male deities in the northern portion. In the second type of town plan the whole town should be fully occupied by houses of various descriptions and inhabited by all classes of people. The temple dominates the village. In the third type of town planning i.e. *Nandyavarta* the planning was meant for the construction of towns and not for the villages. It is generally adopted for the sites either circular or square in shape, with not less than thousand houses but not more than four thousand. The streets run parallel to the central adjoining streets with the temple of the presiding deity in the centre of the town. *Nandyavarta* is the name of a flower.

Padmaka type of plan was practised for building of the towns with fortress all round. The pattern of the plan resembles the petals of lotus radiating outwards from the centre. The city used to be practically an island surrounded by water, having no scope for expansion. Swastika type of plan contemplates some diagonal streets dividing the site into certain triangular plots. The site need not be marked out into a square or rectangle and it may be of any shape. The town is surrounded by a rampart wall, with most of its foot filled with water. Two main streets cross each other at the centre, running south to north and west to east. The characteristic feature of Prastara plan is that the site may be either square or rectangular but not triangular or circular. The sites are set apart for the poor, the middle class, the rich and the very rich. The size of the sites increases according to the capacity of each to purchase or build upon. The main roads are much wider compared to those of other patterns. The town may or may not be surrounded by a fort.

Karmuka plan is suitable for the place where the sites of the town is in the form of a bow or semi-circular or parabolic and mostly applied for towns located on the sea shore or the river banks. The main streets of the town runs from north to south or east to west and cross streets run at right angles to them, dividing the whole area into blocks. The presiding deity, commonly a female deity, is installed in the temple built, in any convenient place.

*Chaturmukha* type of plan is applicable to all towns starting from the largest towns to the smallest village. The site may be either square or rectangular having four faces. The town is laid out east to west lengthwise, with four main streets. The temple of the presiding deity will be always at the centre of the town.

The urban planning during the Moughal period florished in leaps and bounds. Many cities like Fatehpur Sikri, Ajmer, Ujjain, Bharatpur, Benaras, Delhi, Agra etc. clearly bears the influence of Muslim architecture and culture. However, as you know, Ujjain is a city of Ancient India dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. It also evident from the history that a separate department existed for the construction and development works. This

department was headed by the emperor himself, but it had many eminent architects, engineers and ministers as its members. In the regime of Akbar, a public works department was established for the planning and development of construction work. All the Muslim rulers had a separate department of urban planning and development. Like Romans the Moughals too wanted to show their power and pomp by constructing monumental structures for the use of the royal families at the cost of other citizens. The city of Jaipur built by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II during 1720s is one of the best examples of the revival of the Vedic principles of settlement planning on a grid pattern with strict architectural and land use controls on the main streets, residential areas planned with spatial hierarchy of chowks (public squares) being and interjection of main roads through a gateway leading to the main markets of the city.

During the British phase the main emphasis of urban planning was based on their strategic linkages to port towns for the purposes of trade and commerce including defence. Besides these other economic and climatic factors were also taken into account. The evolution of urban planning techniques and solutions initiated at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to tackle the problems of urbanisation, were aimed towards town improvement. Functionally they did not visualize the problem of urban planning beyond the municipal approach to development. In modern India the first urban improvement authority was constituted as far back as 175 years ago in Calcutta under the statute of 1794 with only limited powers. In the light of the experiences of the working of this improvement authority, in 1803 a town improvement committee consisting of 30 nominated leading citizens of Calcutta was constituted. In 1857, this committee was reorganized in the form of a board. This board had 7 commissioners, 3 nominated by the government and 4 selected by the tax payers. In 1864, on the example of Calcutta, and on the advice and insistence of the Royal sanitary commission, the sanitary commissions were set up in Bombay and Madras presidencies to give advice and assistance in all matters relating to public health, sanitation etc.

In the year of 1915, the famous town planner and administrator visited Madras presidency and he advised the government of India on this front. As a consequence, Bombay and Madras states enacted Town Planning acts on the line of the British Housing

and Town planning Acts, 1909 and Mr. H. V. Lanchester was appointed as town planning advisor to the imperial government of India. Although a large number of town planning acts were enacted in different parts of the country since then, the progress made under these enactments were very tardy.

### **Reflection and Action 26.1**

Study the plan of your city/town/village. Prepare a map of all the basic organizations and official buildings related with planning and development of infrastructure of that area.

Compare your pap of facilities with those of others at your study center.

After the independence a fresh impetus on the front of urban planning and development took place. The model act prepared by the Town and Country planning organization got the approval of the minister of the local self government in charge of town planning in 1962. The model act has been supplemented further by two legislations providing for the:

- i) land acquisition for development and planning
- ii) For the creation of development authorities to undertake large scale development of the city and the works relating to the provisions of the life-support system of amenities and services for a more humane urban environment.

The town planning legislations in the stream of directional planning made the provisions for the preparation of the master plans for cities in terms of physical development of urban space for the provisions of infrastructural services. These legislations did not anticipate planning for supra-urban space extending the boundaries of the city to the peripheral areas and their elevation to the regional constellation of the city and its sub-systems.

The existing urban planning legislation in force in India suffers from many deficiencies. A study undertaken by Balachandran and R.N.Haldipur on this subject indicates the following shortcomings:

- i) multiplicity of legal and juridical structures and organisations exist without establishing proper linkages among them,

- ii) overlapping of functions and jurisdictions in the absence of suitable provisions for the coordination of their activities,
- iii) emphasis on plan preparation and not implementation and execution,
- iv) inadequacy of effective land acquisition provisions under the Land Acquisition act of 1894 which has become outdated,
- v) legal inadequacy for checking haphazard development, peripheral growth and ribbon development control,
- vi) lack of provisions for organizational set-up for plan implementation and ,
- vii) lack of public participation in real sense of their involvement.

## **26.4 Main Concerns of Urban Planning**

Some of the main concerns of urban planning are:

- i) to rationalise the distribution of goods and services including economic activities compatible with population redistribution which functions both as an agent of production as well as consumption to minimise the friction of space.
- ii) To improve the level of living and condition of human environment in view of the low level of per-capita income.
- iii) To absorb urban labour supply with increased income of the urban poor in the wake of stagnant economy suffering from unemployment/underemployment.
- iv) The issues of what are the sizes of the towns and cities which would be most advantageous from economic and social viewpoint.
- v) What should be the ratio of rural to urban population to release the pressure on rural land and maintain economic and social balance over the space?
- vi) To suggest the most rational pattern of land use for economic base of the city.
- vii) To achieve an optimum and functionally integrated spatial structure of human settlement pattern to realise the overall goal of the society.

The national plans since their first inception i.e. the first plan (1951-56) laid emphasis on rehabilitation of refugees by augmenting the stock of housing supply and linking housing problems on the sound footings of town and country planning. In the second plan (1956-61) although the task of rehabilitation was considered merely as a problem in itself, but as a part of a wider spectrum of planning of urban areas and the regions

of their location. The second plan recommended that the following three problems should be studied:

- i) Methods of securing planned development in urban areas.
- ii) Expansion of housing facilities.
- iii) Development of civic administration.

The third plan (1961-66) specifically provided for undertaking the preparation of 72 master plans for practically all the major cities, and their surrounding areas including industrial areas and also some of the rapidly growing regions. The central government in this plan period suggested minimum directions for action which were as follows:

- i) Control of urban land values through public acquisition of land and appropriate fiscal policies.
- ii) Physical planning of the use of land.
- iii) Defining tolerable minimum and maximum standard for housing and other services.
- iv) Strengthening of municipal administration for undertaking the development responsibilities.

The fourth plan gave more emphasis to the need for a national urban land policy. It laid emphasis on the following points:

- i) Urban water supply and the sanitation.
- ii) Land acquisition and development.
- iii) Preparation of master plans for the selected towns and regions.

The fifth plan (1974-79) gave the slogan of removal of poverty and on the attainment of self reliance. The following were the major points of urban planning and urban development in this plan.

- i) To augment civic services in urban centres as far as possible and to make them fit for a reasonable level of living.
- ii) To make efforts to tackle the problems of metropolitan cities on a more comprehensive and regional basis.
- iii) To promote the development of smaller towns and new urban centres to ease the pressure of increasing urbanisation.

- iv) To assist in the implementation of projects of national importance such as those related to metropolitan cities or inter-state projects.
- v) To provide necessary support for the enlargement of the scope and functions of the industrial townships undertaken by the central government undertakings so as to make them self-contained.

The draft sixth five year plan (1978-83) gave more emphasis on the infrastructural problems and the plight of the urban poor in the urban areas. The document also recognizes the problem of water and air pollution and the serious threats being imposed by urban dairy to the degradation of human environment.

The new urban planning policy aims at three major objectives:

- i) Revising the growth pattern so that the smallest towns grow fastest, and the largest ones either grow at the slowest or at a slow pace.
- ii) Decongesting the overpopulated areas of large cities so as to create a more balanced and rational relationship between residential and work place like shops, schools etc.
- iii) To see that small and medium towns and new cities develop in a way that the problems of the past are not repeated.

But all these enactments were in the nature of the directional planning aimed at preparing improvement schemes for specific areas. The improvement trusts besides preparing and implementing individual schemes of city improvement or its expansions incorporated the provision of land acquisition and its development and disposal. Although their functions were limited compared to municipal authorities, their jurisdiction was not confined to municipal boundaries alone but was extended to include the peripheral areas also without any comprehensive development plan or perspective of growth and its extension to the regional context. Most of the town planning activities were performed by the improvement trusts but some of the trusts faced difficulties due to their merger either with the corporations or with the newly created authorities like development boards or development authorities.

Gradually with the emergence of new developmental agencies like housing boards, cooperative housing societies, the functioning of improvement trusts was discouraged. Moreover the similarity of functions of both the Development Boards/Authorities and the improvement trusts also created conflict between the two, as the latter took the schemes of more remunerative nature, such as, the development of new areas but neglecting the improvement and redevelopment of older areas of the city. The unplanned consequence of such an urban growth of slums and squatters, misuse of land, and mushrooming colonies in the periphery of the city adding to more burden to the maintenance cost of municipal administration.

In an urbanising society, the urbanisation of people is meaningless without urbanisation of space. The lack of urbanisation policy under the plans and its comprehension by the master plan bears no relation to the social and economic development plan. Under the traditional approach of urban planning there was the concept of master plan. Since the master plans are basically land use plans, their subject and object of interest being the development and use of the space. They are mainly concerned with the programming of intra-urban space. The gradual emergence of this technique of master planning as a control over land use of cities to ensure adequate standard of housing and its transition from housing to neighborhood, to city and its further prolongation to region is not adequately represented by the traditional approach of master planning which is restricted to land use planning alone. The master plans developed to comprehend the process of urbanisation have generally failed to take account of quick changes in population and its related social and economic trends. They are neither comprehensive nor rigid frameworks for the execution of works but signify only broad outlines of a future development plan. As a spectrum of various coordinated land use patterns, master plan is generally undertaken when the actual development has proceeded much ahead of the operational planning. The master plans approach to development as they exist today is designed to accentuate the tide of urbanisation rather than comprehending the social and economic forces of urbanisation.

## **26.5 New Approach to Urban Planning**

The traditional approaches to master plans have many limitations which can be overcome and can be geared for development only if

- i) its scope is wider than the city region.
- ii) the elaboration of master plans for land use is to be effected within the context of regional development plan
- iii) its focus is on policy statements rather than on mapped relationships in terms of a full scale urban and regional development policy.
- iv) its process provides for different mixes of regulations (local, regional and national) and public investments in areas at different stages of urbanisation.
- v) its operational content is a changing sequence of different sectors over functional and geographical units of space.
- vi) its coverage is wider enough to comprehend the development sequences of a system of geographical and spatial units (of villages, of towns, of cities, of regions, and of the nation as a whole).

## **26.6 Main Objectives of the National Urbanisation Policy**

To promote the welfare of the society in general and of urban areas in particular, there is a dire need of designing a national urbanisation policy to serve as a guide for making specific decisions affecting the pattern of urban growth. An urban policy demands enactment of an Act by parliament on national urbanisation policy and planning Act for a more comprehension of social and economic forces for a wider spread of the benefits of urbanisation over the space, which should have among others the following objectives:

- i) Convergence of inter-regional income and growth differentials i.e. controlling city growth in rich regions and expanding urban centres in lagging ones;
- ii) Achieving national economic growth which has its implications in terms of structure and spacing of a hierarchy as a whole to the importance of leading cities as generic forces of economic growth and diffusion of innovation;

- iii) Gradual elimination of differential in life style in terms of productivity and welfare both in urban and rural areas providing the minimum levels of services for improving the quality of life.
- iv) Favour a pattern of urbanisation and economic development which offers wide range of alternative locations and encourages a balanced use of natural and human resources.
- v) Equating the private and social cost of urban development since divergence between social and private costs leads to excessive growth of cities.

### **Reflection and Action 26.2**

Visit your local library and read a book on urban planning in India. Write an essay on “Urban Planning in India” in about two pages on the basis of the account given in your book.

Discuss your essay with other learners at your study center and your Academic counselor.

### **26.7 Conclusion**

The increasing growth pressure on the cities and towns and lots of problems out of it poses new challenges to the urban planners and administrators in present time. Urban planning should be politically and socio-culturally acceptable as well as environmentally, economically, technologically, physically, fiscally and infrastructure-wise feasible. The increasing pressure of population growth on urban land, its use and reuse, the amenities and services and the large number of low income groups in urban areas are some of the important factors contributing to the problems of the urban health hazards, law and order cannot be managed within traditional role performance of the government. For this the role of the urban community is of utmost importance. The entire urban community should take part in urban planning. In other words the planning system should be as democratic as possible in the present time. The basic weaknesses in the urban planning has been that it did not foresee the problems of the informal sector growth within the urban economy, and the locational focus did not spell out the implications of the sectoral

programmes in relation to population distribution catering to the needs of both urban and rural settlements.

## **26.8      Further Reading**

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## **Unit 27**

# **Media and Urban Governance**

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- 27.2 Media Governance Interface
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- 27.4 Nature of Mass Media
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- 27.6 Conclusion
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### **Learning Objectives**

A careful study of this unit will enable you to

- describe the interface between media and governance
- explain the media in contemporary urban governance
- discuss the nature of mass media
- analyze the roles and responsibility of media, and
- the proactive concerns of media

### **27.1 Introduction**

This paper attempts to address the issue of urban governance and more specifically, the role of mass media in promoting good governance in the urban areas. It examines the interface between media and governance and the role it plays in contemporary urban governance.

In the recent years, urban areas, specially, the cities are enhancing their standard to compete in the global markets to attract investments to be a part of global economy (Friedman 1993). Although, on the one hand cities in India attempt to join any other global city of the world, on the other it does not address the growing inequality and polarization within social groups and classes in the city. One of the resultant changes in the transformation is the organization of labour process and a shift from manufacturing economy to service economy. While a detailed analysis of the impact of services on the income structure in the urban area is much in the offing, however, some of the studies undertaken in other parts of the world ( Sassen,Saskia,2000), show

that the service industries have a significant effect on the growth of unemployment, paying below poverty level wages and so on. This results in a tendency towards increased economic polarization that affect the use of land, organization of labour markets, housing, and consumption structure. What it refers to, is an economy which is undergoing transition whereby growth contributes to inequality among the existing groups in the city. Indeed, today there is a growing disparity, social inequality and poverty in the urban areas. It is equally alarming that inspite of growing poverty and inequality at the urban centers, the growth of urban population in India is less likely to recede. What is peculiar is the growth of the urban population at the cost of urban centers and decline of service provisions to attend the new migrants in the city. Although, urban India contributes to 70% of GDP, at the same time it faces enormous challenges. Most cities are lacking basic infrastructure, urban utility services and governance mechanism. The urban poor lack today adequate housing and social infrastructure, access to clean, regular supply of water, adequate sanitation facilities, comprehensive solid and liquid waste management systems, problems faced by slum settlements. Iniquitous distribution of resources and lack of access to basic services to socially and economically disadvantaged groups and finally, lack of information regarding citizen's needs and grievances.

Rarely, Mass Media helps in bringing to attention the plight of the poor to the larger society or to the governments of the day. Today Urban poor has landed up in a no entry zone where the privileges of past welfare policies are withdrawn and suddenly they are faced post welfare economy without any support to fall back upon. This is also a move from government to Governance where by other stakeholders are being asked to come to the rescue of the Urban poor. Today, the urban centers are becoming more diverse at the same time they are becoming more connected. Media reach once bounded by the city are more segmented by taste, identity, and ideology, and more geographically unbounded. Media serves as the connective tissue between the urban poor and the government, but changes in the media system have threatened the bonds between media, people, and governments. These changes include consolidated ownership, looser definition of public service obligations for broadcasters, and a variety of Internet-related changes in the way both the people and governments function. The new media prompt people to explore the potential for revitalization of governance structures. Amidst these social transformations, the media – new and old, big and small – are both part of the process and

interpreters of the process. But for a better urban governance, there is a need of developing a complex mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups can articulate their interests, mediate their differences, and exercise their legal rights and obligations. Governance includes the state, but transcends it by taking in the private sector and civil society. The state creates a conducive political and legal environment. The private sector generates jobs and income opportunities and the civil society facilitates political and social interaction – mobilizing urban marginal groups to participate in economic, social and political activities. The present unit focuses on these issues and exemplifies the role of mass media in the process of urban governance.

## **27.2 Media-Governance Interface**

The relationship between mass media and society are inextricably interlinked. Mass media helps in empowering people as well as creating awareness regarding age old oppression, rights of the citizenry and the need for freedom of speech and expression. Freedom of expression and association are both the cause and effect of institution building for a better governance. These freedoms are crucial to human creativity and dignity. Social groups cannot organise or act to achieve any group interest unless they can communicate properly and overcome the difficulties of collective action. But Mass media may not be effective if the information is unevenly distributed in society. For instance, if media infrastructures are not uniformly distributed among class, caste, gender, religion and region than it would affect and constrain the ability of the media to penetrate and inform the people uniformly in society. As a result, it might weaken the notion of citizenship and make them ill informed about their rights. Thus, Mass Media have an important role to play in generating both trust and distrust of citizens upon governing institutions. Mass Media also plays an important role in creating civic education regarding human rights, election campaigns, voters education, election monitoring, observing code of conduct, exposing corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and business persons and educating the people. It can also expose nepotism, corruption at high offices, citizens' grievances and highlight the role of the government's opponents to erode public trust on governance. Sensational and negative reporting might increase the sale of news papers and increase readership in the short-run but it weakens their credibility in promoting social cohesiveness and cooperation in the long run. Partisan media have often encouraged a cynical corrosion of trust

of people in the governance process and induced a generalised distrust on political leaders, civil servants and other institutions of the state. They do not manufacture public opinion. They generate a ‘crisis of trust’ between the government and the people and disable the regulatory institutions in combating social fragmentation and violent conflicts.

There is a need to create a democratic public and influence the public institutions to be responsive to people. Sustained deliberation is essential to make those in power stick to responsible and legitimate action in their public life. The media often monitors political authority and style because it is on this basis that the multi actors of governance- the state, the market, the civil society and the international regime, conduct public affairs. Governance in essence is the process of steering, coordinating and communicating human efforts towards the attainment of certain goals (Deutsch, 1963:124) such as security, rule of law, identity and channels of participation and social welfare (Zurn, 1999:5-6). Media effectiveness is, therefore, essential to democratic governance, a form of governance that is concerned with making, applying and monitoring day to day progress. Governance also presupposes a partnership of institutions and processes, this partnership empowers the marginals to pool information, knowledge and capacities to develop shared policies and practices on issues of public concern. Mass media can play an important role in guiding and affecting the conduct of governance actors by shaping a sense of shared experience and political community. They are linked to the systems of society and situations under which a society operates. Without effective channels of communication among the members of a community, no system of governance can exist.

Mass media can help sustain human relationships- dialogue, engagement and compromise and reveal the mutuality of interests in governance matters. Media helps governance by structuring institutional relations of the society and by shaping the choices of people in public policy. Governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy making; a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions; a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law (World Bank, 1994). The interface of media and governance can be captured by a number of variables such as the level of freedom of expression and organization, freedom from discrimination, freedom from want and fear, opportunity for consultation and involvement in public policy, transparency and accountability guarantees, etc. enforcing and monitoring the rules of the political game.

Mass Media can help citizens by raising their voice and participation in its institutions and encouraging to press their demands publicly within the framework of the law and the constitution. It can equally help in identifying public service ineffectiveness or abuses of executive power or malfeasance on the part of ministers or civil servants, and thus directly contribute towards a higher level of public accountability of the executive branch of government" (Watson, 1999: 4). Imperfections of information in the public sector create disparities between the "actions of those governing and those that they are supposed to serve" (Stiglitz, 1999: 6) and create incentives for secrecy. However, sometimes close relationship with power and the media fall prey to its designs rather than be a part in shaping those designs for public good. Hence, the worldview of most of the media is often biased, false and very ideologically filtered discouraging the growth of collective action among the different castes, classes, gender and regions.

If mass media policies are constantly shaped by the corporate and Industrial houses, then they generate what Karl Marx calls a "false consciousness", confusing people about their own interests and those of the magnates. To both Karl Marx and Karl Mannheim, ideology is the symbolical expression of economic interests, the fusion of class and politics (Bell, 1990:41). The instrumental reasons springing from the logic of commercial advertising leads people towards their de-politicisation where people as consumers are influenced more by techniques of the media and the consumer culture it fosters. In countries where the levers of power are in the hands of a state bureaucracy, the monopolistic control over the media, often supplemented by official censorship, makes it clear that the media serve the ends of a dominant elite." transcend the ideological underpinnings of their position and reconcile the fragmentation of separate constituencies and belief systems and still inform the public adequately of what is good and what is bad in public and private lives? This requires courageous and successful intervention on the part of the public and the liberation of journalists from the shackles of the system.

Overt and covert influence of private economic and corporate power on the media, concealed from public accountability, does not help keep a constitutional democratic government amply just and clean. Traditional bureaucratic governance cannot keep pace with the fast changing modern society, which is moving with the speed of the digital revolution and e-commerce. New governance patterns require speedy decision-making, de-bureaucratisation, flexible

organisational formats and complex management capabilities. Effectiveness of media and communications is paramount to sustain these processes.

If journalists, like economists and lawyers, reflect the institutional biases of their employer, they weaken the power of the public. In the globalized context, sovereignty in the domain of government decision-making and action has been related to territorial and constitutional dimensions. Governance decision-making has become de-territorialized and complex, trespassing also the boundary of the Constitutional state. As internal power is fragmented, the government is compelled to pursue policies through negotiations on shared interests. This means that the government does not have monopoly over decision-making, conflict resolution, communication and collective action. However, It has to share the ‘space’ with the market, the civil society and the international regime. Each actor produces its own system of knowledge, institutions and communication, own theory of symbolization and symbolic representation and seeks its own ideal form of society asserting its own validity claims on the representation of truth.

### **Reflection and Action 27.1**

Read a news item related with any major issue which has been reported in the Newspapers of the day. Read and critically analyse the way the same news item has been reported in at least three Newspapers.

Do you perceive any bias or tilt towards any ideology in all of them or one of them? Write a report on “Newspaper Reporting and Ideological Bias” in about two pages. Discuss the topic with others in your family or students at your study center.

### **27.3 Media in Contemporary Urban Governance**

In the present Indian context, media plays an important role in the exertion of power and distribution of values. Media affects the overall quality of public life and also shapes people’s engagement in the specific policy decisions in the Indian democracy. To make greater impact within the broad socio-political context, media needs to create a ‘space’ to effectively carry out its functions. In Urban India, communication and information flows are highly concentrated.

Today, Indian cities look like a ‘wired society’ or a ‘network society’ but this does not ensure a proportional representation among its inhabitants. It follows a logic of ‘pay per society’ where by receiving of media messages are measured by minutes and hours and affordability by its consumer. The face of Indian media has been fast changing with the growth of the Internet, the phenomenal rise of satellite and cable networks, the continuing growth of language press, despite various challenges and the blurring of lines between news and entertainment. There is a sort of ‘crisis’ in the present media due to processes of commercialization and commodification. Who so ever can afford to procure the media acquisitions can have access to media and the messages. Although these media provide the occasion to link vertically across the world, horizontally, they do not ensure communications among groups, communities and gender. However, it helps in reinstating existing power constellations and the extent of their influence. Such a system limits the proportional distribution of information, making it inaccessible to a large section of the society. In other words, the existing gaps between the information haves and have-nots are widened with new additions like the digital divide.

One may loosely distinguish three types of media in India governed by their own doctrinal system. One group, mainly officially owned and beneficiary of government patronage, is conformist which blindly endorses the policies and activities of the political circuit of the system constituted by the party-parliament-government axis. This group is directly related to the systems of power and authority and represents the interests and ideology of the incumbent political class. Due to over control of the government and risk-averse tendencies of journalists in objective reporting, reviewing and analysing of news and views, they are less concerned with the restructuring of life-worlds. The second group, that one can call reformist, is privately owned and shares the fundamental values of the democratic system but puts critical eyes and ears on the policies and activities of the government and, therefore, seeks moderate reviews and reforms in the style of governance. This group is a powerful defender of modernity and rationality for interpreting and reforming the conditions of public life in India. The third category is radical which advocates fundamental change in the basic rules and styles of governance. At the same time, the radical group is also concerned about developing new forms of knowledge. Each group has its own constituency, shapes its own motives and tries to attract people to its products. The preferred role for journalists would be not to form what Michael

Foucault calls an "ideological chorus line" but serve as "interlocutors in a discussion about how to govern" (Gordon, 1991:7). Nothing could be more apt in describing the Indian Media.

## **27.4 Nature of Mass Media**

Media in India are tightly compartmentalised into divergent interest groups, which displease one another in the process of "manufacturing consent," thereby intending to reduce the scope of human freedom and critical thinking. The main challenge before the Indian media is how to overcome the contradictions paralysing them and satisfactorily resolve a collective action situation? This is the reason why despite the age of information revolution the majority of Indian people are terribly ill-informed. The media are powerful means for state authorities, political parties and leaders to exhort the citizens to actively support their policies. These policies are derived from a set of political beliefs, strong ideas and certain doctrinal systems called ideologies. India has generally a free press, with its publications in circulation in every urban node where modern amenities are available. They reflect every political point of view and determine which events are newsworthy on a left-center-right horizontal ideological sphere, rather than on a vertical future-past dividing line.

Most of the media in India are privately owned but they do not operate independent of government rules and regulations on content, ownership and techno- infrastructure policies. It is only through media freedom that various viewpoints can be articulated in the realm of opinion formation and judgment. This is how people are informed and are enabled to participate in the democratic process. A sound democratic process achieves greater common good for the present and the next generation. As interest groups and political parties dominate the media in India, their political culture is accordingly fragmented. This fragmentation arises from the varied socialisation experiences of the various groups and sub-groups and which result into a one-sided and biased fixation on the primacy of their own interests. "The control over the media of communication by political parties and interest groups means that the audience for political communication is fragmented" (Almond, 1971:46) producing often disharmonious modes of political socialisation and fragmented action. Empowerment of the people produces media visibility while marginality produces their invisibility in policy attention.

As the media in India have become concentrated in the hands of a few powerful interest groups in key urban areas, their contributions in freeing the political society and providing equal opportunity to all is minimal. As a result, it has widened the knowledge divide between the core and the periphery and the rich and the poor even further. In no way do the media constitute a vibrant ‘public sphere’ in Urban India. The relationship between media and governance is fraught with tensions and meaningful possibilities. It cannot be denied that both media and governance in India suffer from serious problems, which at times even feed into each other. Suspension of civil liberties, excessive militarization, communal assertions, and homogenizing tendencies have too often spelled doom for Indian democracy. In this context it is imperative that media becomes more sensitive on issues of democratic governance, people’s struggles against social injustice and inequality and so on. Its commitment towards democratic norms and values in its own governance system, structure and function is a must. Further, the role of people’s organizations, social movements, voluntary organizations and other civil society formations in monitoring the functioning of media and making it more people centred is another critical issue. The role of civil society organization is important especially in the light of the fact that autonomous organizations within media like those of journalists and workers, have not only become weak but they also severely lack in their ability to raise critical issues pertaining to media governance and its functioning.

### **Reflection and Action 27.2**

What do you think about the role of Indian media in the context of governance? Write your opinion in about five pages and discuss the topic with your Academic Counsellor, learners at your study center or any friend of yours who is aware about the problem.

On the other hand, state control over television and radio, the role of multinationals and big corporate houses and bourgeois monopoly over print media has meant that media has often remained inaccessible to the vast majority of the urban poor and the marginalized. Overwhelming commercial interests and monopolies of a few affluent individuals and business houses are not good for democracy. The media, under monopoly conditions, does not provide a wide range of interpretive frameworks that are important for the well being of democracies. The carving up of media markets inter-nationally as well as nationally by mega, transnational

corporations has led to a catastrophic effect on the diversity of opinion, the nature of access and participation in the media spectrum and people's right to communicate. Real access to and participation in media appears to be for the few and not for the many. Simultaneously, the state has time and again tried to curb the voice of the media, to prosecute and harass those who have come out openly against repressive practices.

Over the years the corporate sector has developed its own press and channels. The political parties have their own newspapers. The voluntary organizations, groups engaged in movements, associations of the oppressed castes and the citizens engaged in promoting alternative politics have grown in terms of its sheer number and the area of operation. However they have not been able to develop their own press or television channels with a mass reach and sound credentials. It may be noted that different civil society formations have developed and are running their own medium of communications, like small magazines or newsletters. But these do not have an impact on a macro level and have not been able to develop a professional form. The challenge to develop a Community Radio and Cmmunity Television or at least a magazine is before all those who are engaged in various ways to promote and support alternative movements, alternative social groups and alternative models of development.

Therefore, a major challenge for Urban India is the enlargement of internal institutional structures of the media reflecting the broader society to be able to defend the interests of the politically weak population. A media community that does not acknowledge a larger responsibility to society is less likely to engage in self-correction, in terms of how it educates the public and what opportunities it offers to them for the future. But good Urban governance requires an effective media to promote participation and concern regarding public goods. Only those media pursuing the public interest can play their roles effectively. "The modern economics of information emphasises that once knowledge is made public, it becomes a public good that cannot be made private again" (Stiglitz,1999:4). Without a free flow of information, socialising interactions and collective action cannot be effective. Information flow has a positive correlation between communication and awareness of people about their political knowledge and between learning and involvement in problem solving.

## **27.5 Roles and Responsibilities of Media**

If we want to define various developments in the particular context of governance, and governance that means something for a majority of the poor, the struggling people, then we must first realize that the media, in all its varied forms, has opened up the potential for new forms of participation. People are discovering ways to think about themselves and to participate in governance that would have perhaps been unthinkable a generation before. Their access to information and accessibility of information has both increased.

Although different forms of media are growing rapidly, and people are interested to learn more about contemporary issues, the media is behaving like a market product. It attempts to satisfy people's thirst for 'news' but basically keeps in focus its profitability and market sentiments. It is clear that in the contemporary context the media cannot become a mission towards the goal of social transformation on a large scale. It is doubtful whether it can even become a leading agent in the process of establishing a people based governance. The media, particularly the newspapers, have managed to create conditions for a liberal democracy, a 'public sphere', where the public can widely share its ideas.

In order for the public to renew their stake in media, it is essential that media ownership and control be regulated so as to prevent existing media monopolies from increasing their stake in the media industry. The government should increase its commitment for Community Radio and television at district and local levels. Citizens' movements that are committed towards reforms in the media industry should be encouraged. It is a fact that the press, television channels and the entire media could be a business. But the journalists per se are not for trade or business. Journalism is a social responsibility. It is a struggle to gain public space within the private sphere. One common weakness of Indian journalists is that they report news and views on the basis of the "power hierarchy of persons" rather than rationality of their views. The priority of news accorded to powerful persons obscures the very purpose of the media to speak truth to power and give voice to the voiceless. Such a media culture erodes the very philosophy of public interest and common good. In the long run, such a trend rationalises the culture of power and victimises the powerless sections of the society.

What one sees now in India is that the government often chooses policies to serve partisan interests, not the general interest of the public. On the other hand, the globalisation process has de-coupled the national society from the nation state and continues to disconnect citizenship from nationality. As globalization processes demand national consistency in laws, institutions, processes and behavioural patterns with the rest of the world, many actors in the Indian sub-system have been independently articulating to their counterparts abroad. This incongruence of social and political space places the Indian media in a dilemma: Should they be driven by self-interest like the other actors or propel themselves towards public interest orientations? Many of them have even been deviating from norms and rules that are constitutive of governance. Obviously, in the Indian multi-party polity, the elite did alter the basic principles of politics but not the style of governance they inherited from the ancient regime. Yet, it is also the media that have brought participatory rights of the people into the public sphere. The decisions of political power have thus been bound and popular sovereignty linked to universal human rights. Achieving governance goals requires the development of three critical processes: "accountability, which denotes the effectiveness with which the governed can exercise influence over those that govern; legitimacy, which is concerned with the rights of the state to exercise power over its citizens, and the extent to which those powers are perceived to be rightly exercised; and transparency, which is founded on the existence of mechanisms for ensuring public access to decision making" (Robinson, 1996:347). These attributes are central in upholding the national integrity system of governance. One can also add one more process to it - equity- given the state of underdevelopment in the Urban area and in general in the Indian society and its media in particular. The communications policy of the Indian government aims to expand radio, television and internet services proportionately in order to make them comprehensive. At the same time, the government also seems cautious enough to make them competitive by enabling them to adjust with the obligations arising out of the nation's pending membership of the WTO and GATT treaty. For the goal to be met successfully, synergy from the complementarity of public-private partnership is necessary in both business as well as in the media.

As human beings are social beings, not atomised individuals, real freedom can exist only in a cooperative society in which a modicum of social justice is attained and people can form groups

for the aggregation, articulation and communication of their interest upon the governance structures. Indian media, in general, have a profound influence upon the educational response to social disadvantages of people and the problems of social inequality, marginalisation and discrimination. Media discourses and research on bonded labour, Dalit, child labour, women, etc have been exemplary in articulating perspective transformation and re-socialisation. This is helping gender and child socialisation towards freedom, equality and identity and nourishing the potential for change in the dominant cultural values, including the prevailing masculine dynamics, political structure and political culture. Indeed, the Indian media are also helping to transform people into public by means of provoking discussions even in public spaces and the private rooms. Indian media have exposed the criminal negligence of decision-makers. Newspapers report widespread hunger, injustice and corruption in day to day life. Journalists have been calling for interventions from the government, civil society and international community to reduce the amount of intolerable poverty, inequality, exclusion, ignorance and marginalisation. Indian media have thus been evoking an image of the watchdog of the society promising to liberate politics from pre-political and anti-political impulses. The attempt by civil society organizations to assert the importance of issues like, ‘governance for the people’ vis-à-vis media is an attempt to search for its own public space and its own means. There must exist a relevant political consciousness so that a democratic impact is possible. Media to be effective must form part of an ideological and political context – of attitude, feeling, hope and critical democratic values and practice. Urban poor, specially, the dalits, women and other marginalized sections of the society are also using the media to make their voices heard. Media in India depends on the central impulses and aspirations of democratic governance.

## **27.6 Proactive Concerns of Media**

In keeping with this understanding of democratic ideals, Indian mainstream media also place great emphasis on the creative role of new social movements espousing the values of peace, ecological preservation, democracy, human rights etc in democratic life. For the conception of politics to be adequate, it should involve the creation of a righteous space for the citizens to communicate and resolve issues of their concern. In this space, citizens can exercise their democratic rights and freedoms as well as include a variety of perspectives to deliberate on questions and seek answers. Politics is nothing but the processes involved in the execution of

these public duties. Politics is essentially public in the sense that the political sphere is shared equally by every member of the polity regardless of gender, wealth, class or caste position or political power. It is not essentially a manipulative vocation. And, to the extent that it appears to be so, it is only those selfish politicians who make it a dirty game. When their numbers rise, politics gets mired in crisis. In India, such a crisis has already led to the declaration of a state of emergency in the country and the suspension of fundamental rights and freedom of Indian citizens. It is a crisis whose roots lie in the malfunction of politics. If politics exclusively serves the private interest and exhibits apathy towards those who are not in politics but who do make up the public sphere, it cannot become a matter of public or collective concern or, by implication, political. In no way does such politics treasure a common ground for citizens and leaders of all hues. To use the public trust for private goals is just as serious a crime against the public as any seizure of public property for private gain. Anti-public politics, therefore, becomes anti-political. Democratic politics intends to widen the public sphere as it is deliberative, participatory, public, inclusive, and transparent. Anti-politics, by contrast, is essentially individualist, exclusive, private, non-public, and opaque. Anti-political trends become contagious if institutional mechanisms are not geared to correct them.

The public-private-donor deliberations have offered space for societal feedback, information sharing and coordination and have also enabled citizen groups to have wider access to knowledge and information. "Greater political activism means greater access, influence and control of the political system" (Patterson, 1999: 196) which broadens people's participation in public affairs. In an information- driven society, political power is increasingly defined in terms of the distribution of information. And, the media have become the central arena in the contest for power, resource and identity. The power of the media to control political thinking has been enormous. Transparency guarantees can play an instrumental role in "preventing corruption, financial irresponsibility and underhand dealings" (Sen, 2000:40). Technology can play a part here. In India, computerised networking of local private offices, government ministries and departments is gradually introducing transparency in their activities and operations and creating a bridge between the state and society. This process is expected to build a culture of trust. In other words, technology has a key role in governance. India has identified three areas of importance in formulating its information technology (IT) strategy- universal access to information and communication technology (ICT), education and training necessary for IT and

identification and adoption of IT applications. Public knowledge and access to information tools are essential not only to access government information but also to avail themselves of the social services and industry and business services. Those tools empower citizens to make important choices. Apart from the greater degree of transparency that government activities are infused with, these tools also induce media competitiveness to respond to the diverse challenges that emerge. One positive attribute of Indian polity is that it encourages open public debate on crucial matters affecting the life of citizens. Another positive aspect is the search for public rationale for every action of the government. This means information has become a core of the governing process.

The constitutional provision of the right to information (RTI) is expected to broaden the rights of citizens and access in the decision making of the government, provide meaningful control over the political processes and serve as an important tool of effective public oversight. But, the right to seek, receive and impart information is neither cost-free nor without responsibility. Nevertheless, the right to information and guaranteed rights are the two vital means of achieving democratic goals. A free and responsible press, an independent judiciary and proper government data information systems are perceived to be keys to good governance. It depends on the ability of journalists to a) access, gather, process, verify, and accurately furnish the information; and b) reach out to the diverse people, link them to an attentive public, policy community or decision makers. Information alone is of trivial value unless there are proper devices for using the knowledge obtained to influence government conduct in the executive sphere, especially in enhancing personal and national security, making and implementing of political decisions.

In the legislative sphere, giving people a voice means a higher level of political participation in the very centre of the policy making process. A greater level of media access is the first important step in facilitating public discussion on major policy shifts, representation and reflection of public preferences in policy making and articulating even the poor and marginalized citizen's interests in public policy matters. In the sphere of adjudication, the media can articulate equal access to entitlements, fundamental rights and social justice for the people as well as aim to establish a system of governmental accountability and due process of law. The

system of justice essentially constitutes collective goods. Indian planners and policy makers have also realised the intrinsic correlation between sovereignty of the people and media freedom and regularly organize programmes on stakeholder "consultation," "participation" and "ownership" on important public matters. India's government and its development partners have provided voice and participation to the media in legislative debates, preparation of Country Cooperation Frameworks and the India Development Forum. It is only "through voice- through informed discussion of the policies being pursued -that effective governance can be exercised" (Stiglitz, 1999:6). Greater information and transparency are vital instruments for informed public debate and for increasing popular trust and confidence in the institutions of governance. Governance today requires embeddedness of policy making in the consultative process, which involves the participation of all the stakeholders of society including the media. Media education supports the creation of an informed media public, a public that is able to critically judge between good and bad media content. Simultaneously however, for a true democracy, we also have to ensure that there is a strong stream of media free of any government control, with free speech and free press.

A free and responsible media is an important tool to make government accountable to its actions and make it responsive to the diverse needs of society. Freedom of communication is indeed a necessary but by no means a sufficient condition for its appropriate democratic performance (Meyer, 2000: 15). The public purpose of the media is to articulate the societal purpose to the institutions of governance. Though the government has a provision for spokespersons in each ministry and important departments in India and that it organises meet-the-press to facilitate the flow of information to the citizens, the exchanges between the government and media persons have not been satisfactory. The main problem appears to be a lack of experience with dealing with the media by the spokespersons. In fact, both sides are constrained by shortages of experts, resources and information base as well as a culture of listening and learning. Self-censorship or ethical codes of conduct of the media are an oft-advertised mode of self-regulation. But they are meaningless terminologies if they are not checked by other institutions of governance, such as an attentive public, effective judiciary and legislative means and even a responsive executive that does what it promises. Fair competition in the marketplace also helps ensure a free press. Indian press is free but not strong enough to facilitate inter-ethnic, inter-

regional and inter-religious communication aiming to contribute to the nation-building process. Media discourse in India is, therefore, weakly institutionalised and poorly sustained. Indian media often conduct on-the-spot interviews with the man on the street to help bring pressing societal problems to light. But such interviews are largely conducted in urban areas, mostly in the metros, where 60 per cent of all the publications are concentrated. By educating the public, the mass media can affect policy debates and policy choice thus connecting people to the institutions of governance. A broader spread of education and information and the growing pluralism of the society are certainly new pressures on public authorities to respond.

One should not also forget that newspapers are confined to small elites in urban areas and are quite unimportant in the overall process of communication since they do not reach a sizeable public in rural areas. This means that there could be a serious problem of urban biasness in governance institutions if corrective measures are not taken. This is the imperative to expand media reach to the farthest corners of the country. Indeed, decision-makers must be freed from a syndrome of listening only to the loudest voice.

There is also a reverse causality truth between the media and governance: Good governance also promotes media professionalism. Demand and supply of information go together. One cannot be included at the exclusion of the other. The media are powerful proxies of governance. What is still important is that new forms of information systems require new skills for journalists to be able to use the instruments to participate in innovation and market creation. Since governance is a purposive process striving to achieve societal goals, the media of communication serve as bridges linking the bottom with top social groups. It is hightime that the Indian journalists need to focus on the to better address the needs of the disenfranchised groups at the margins of India's society, economy and polity and help them project the truth independent of government influence and control. They should provide them greater representation in the mainstream. The solution to this problem lies in diversifying the ownership and control of media. It is equally important to make people aware of the main provisions of the Constitution, including their fundamental rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of information and making people active in public life, being players, not spectators. The help of the media themselves can be sought here.

Another aspect of a proper information flow is in the ownership structure of the media houses. When the government was the sole owner of the largest media houses, the criticisms were

simple to understand -that the government should not be the one to disseminate information about itself. But now the private sector is the more powerful counterpart in the news business. In the private sector also, it is the larger business houses that have been dominating the show. Known businessmen have owned the large publication houses, FM stations and even TV stations. This has led to criticisms regarding partisan reporting, which is alleged to be worse than the government media reporting as they have been protecting their business turfs through misinformation rather than seeking to fulfill the public's right to information.

There have even been cases where two large publications have been battling out in the pages with one writing exactly the opposite of what the other writes. This has nothing to do with trying to fulfill the public interest but rather about domestic private interest groups taking up the available tools (this time the media outlets) to lash out at each other. This shows that accountability of the newspapers is to the powers that be and the interests that own them rather than the people.

The ownership structure debate is a real one in India as it transcends other boundaries that South

Asian media houses have yet to cross. In spite of objections by the majority of media houses to foreign involvement in the sensitive information dissemination business, media control by foreigners is not a big problem in India. To make matters worse, a domestic TV channel is fighting it out with a government minister who has allegedly prevented it from satellite broadcasting its programmes. It is forced to uplink from another country. Although such one may have bureaucratic reasons for these discrepancies, one cannot ignore the fact that the Indian public arena is being used to promote the private interests of not only the local interest groups but also foreign ones.

It is widely accepted that a free and investigative press is an important mechanism for ensuring the accountability of elected officials and bureaucracies to ordinary citizens. It is also well accepted that this mechanism is not working as well as it could be. Indian newspapers assign only 4% of their coverage to social reporting. The low priority accorded to social reporting is partly due to a perception among media professionals (publishers, editors, journalists, etc.) of a lack of public interest in news coverage of urban poverty and development issues. An important consequence of this is that major social issues facing hundreds of millions of people – such as

the lack of adequate basic services for the urban poor – receive almost no coverage in the mainstream South Asian media.

A number of other aspects of the relationships between local officials, the news media and citizens (particularly poor citizens) are not working well. A phenomenon closely related to the limited interest in social issues among journalists is the weakness of consumer culture among the urban poor. The urban poor tend not to see themselves as having the right or the capacity to exact a minimum standard of public service delivery from local officials. Furthermore, there is a tendency for the media to aggressively challenge and criticize the government as a matter of course. While independent, investigative journalism is an essential component of well-functioning democracies, an aggressively antagonistic relationship with the press can lead to a culture of withdrawal and secrecy among government officials. The result of this is a loss of confidence in government, inadequate understanding of complex social issues by citizens and journalists, and no improvement in the government's delivery of services.

The inclusion of the media would help civil-society organizations representing the urban poor to disrupt the ‘vicious circle’ of local government inattention to service delivery issues. The close presence of journalists, we reasoned, would encourage accountability in local government, transparency in decision-making, and ensure that the ‘voice’ of the urban poor was heard in service delivery issues which affect them. This, in turn, was expected to encourage the urban poor to have greater expectations and make greater demands of their local government.

## **27.7 Conclusion**

Modern societies are gauged by the level of media involvement in monitoring the exercise of political sovereignty and affecting the conduct of governance. The policy question is: Do media promote good governance? Yes, they do. The effectiveness of many functions of governance actors depends on the media. Independent journalists report, analyse and criticise social evils and denounce injustice and oppression wherever they occur. At the same time they create incentives by positive coverage of the social ideals. In India, the relationship between the mass media and the performance of governance actors has to yield more. Mass media forms the basic cells of public and private life in India. Owing to their key roles, media professionals in India are invoking the principles of integrity and accountability of the private and public sectors and seeking rationale of every action of the government. One can also notice parameter shifts in

media freedom in India with the level and intensity of the democratisation process. Media regulation, media professionalism and responsibility and the state of governance go hand in hand.

## **27.8 Further Reading**

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