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G. S. II – Urbanization (Society)

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Introduction

Urbanization in India was mainly a post independence phenomenon, due to adoption of mixed system of economy by the country, which gave rise to the development of private sector. Urbanization has been taking place at an increasingly fast rate in India. Population residing in urban areas in India, according to 1901 census, was 11.4%. This count increased to 28.53% in the 2001 census, and has crossed 30% as per the 2011 census, standing at 31.16% to be exact. According to a 2007 UN State of the World Population report, by 2030, 40.76% of country's population is expected to reside in urban areas. As per the World Bank, India, along with China, Indonesia, Nigeria and the United States, will lead the world's urban population surge by 2050.

Urbanization, indeed is the process of becoming urban, moving to cities, changing from agriculture to other pursuits common to cities, such as trade, manufacturing, industry and management, and corresponding changes of behavior patterns. It is the process of expansion in the entire system of interrelationships by which population maintains itself in the habitat.

An increase in the size of towns and cities leading to growth of urban population is the most significant dimension of urbanization. In ancient times there have been great many cities such as Rome or Baghdad, but ever since industrialization and increasing industrial production cities have grown phenomenally and now urbanization is very much part of our contemporary life.

Definition

In this section, we will discuss different definitions and phenomenon's associated with the urban areas. It includes Census definition of Urban areas, Urban Agglomeration, Over-Urbanization, Sub Urbanization, Counter Urbanization and Census towns.

In 1961 census, 'town' was defined and determined on the basis of number of empirical tests:

a) a minimum population of 5000
b) a density of not less than 1,000 per square mile,
c) three-fourth of the occupations of the working population should be outside of agriculture.
d) the place should have a few characteristics and amenities such as newly founded industrial areas, large housing settlements and places of tourist importance and civic amenities.

Urban Agglomeration: This term was introduced in 1971 census. Very often large railway colonies, university campuses, port areas, military camps etc. come up outside the statutory limits of the city or town but adjoining it. Such areas may not themselves qualify to be treated as towns but if they form a continuous spread with the adjoining town, it would be realistic to treat them as urban. Such settlement has been termed as outgrowths, and may cover a whole village, or part of a village. Such towns together with their outgrowths have been treated as one urban unit and called 'urban agglomeration'.

Over-Urbanization: It refers to the increased exemplifications of the characters of urbanization in a city or its surrounding rural area. It results from excessive development of urban traits. Due to the expansion of the range of urban activities and occupations, greater influx of secondary functions like industry, increasing and widespread development of an intricate bureaucratic administrative network, the increased sophistication and mechanization of life and the influx of urban characters into the surrounding rural area, over urbanization gradually replaces the ruralistic and traditionalistic traits of a community. Mumbai and Kolkata are two such examples of cities.

Sub-Urbanization: It is closely related to over-urbanization of a city. When cities get over-crowded by population, it may result in sub-urbanization. Delhi is a typical example. Sub-urbanization means urbanization of rural areas around the cities characterized by the following features:

- a sharp increase in the 'urban (non-agricultural) uses' of land
- inclusion of surrounding areas of towns within its municipal limits, and
- intensive communication of all types between town and its surrounding areas

Counter-Urbanization: It is a demographic and social process whereby people move from urban areas to rural areas. It first took place as a reaction to inner-city deprivation and overcrowding. Counter urbanization occurs when some large cities reach a point where they stop growing further or actually begin to decrease in size as their population start moving into suburban areas or smaller cities thereby leapfrogging the rural-urban fringe. There are instances which show that the phenomenon of counter urbanization is occurring in India.

Census Towns: In 2011, a new definition of census town has been developed. This urban classification of 'census towns' helps differentiate between India's small farming communities and the larger market town-type settlements that are experiencing rapid and haphazard growth.

To be classified as a census town, a village must fulfill three criteria;

a) it need atleast 5,000 inhabitants,
b) a density of 400 people per sq. km, and
c) atleast three quarters of its male working population must be "engaged in non-agricultural pursuits".

Process of Urbanization

Urbanization as a structural process of change is generally related to industrialization but it is not always the result of industrialization. Urbanization results due to the concentration of large-scale and small scale industrial an commercial, financial and administrative set up in the cities; technological development in transport and communication, cultural and recreational activities. The excess of urbanization over industrialization that makes it possible to provide employment for all persons coming to urban areas is, in fact, what sometimes leads to over urbanization.

In India, a peculiar phenomenon is seen: industrial growth without a significant shift of population from agriculture to industry and 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 activities, but there is still a large migration of population from rural areas to urban areas. This makes urban areas choked; while at the same time there is lack of infrastructural facilities to cope with this rising population.

In context of India, the process of urbanization is seen as a socio-cultural process, economic process and a geographical process. As a **socio-cultural phenomenon,** it is a melting pot of people with diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. As an **economic process**, the city is a focal point of productive activities. It exists and grows on the strength of the economic activities existing within itself. Under the **geographical process**, it deals with migration or change of location of residence of people and involves the movement of people from one place to another.

Urbanization in India

India has a long history of urbanization with spatial and temporal discontinuities. It is an ongoing process that has never stopped and has rarely, slowed down since it's beginning. Urbanization in India is divided into different phases, beginning from Indus valley civilization to reaching watermark during the Mughal period and also contribution from the British made to the process of urbanization in India.

Post-independence witnessed rapid urbanization in India on a scale never before achieved. The major changes that have occurred in India's urban scene after India's urban independence are the building of new administrative cities, the construction of new industrial cities and township near major cities, the rapid growth of one-lakh and one million cities, the massive growth of slums and rural-urban fringe, the introduction of city planning and the general improvement in civic amenities.

India is rapidly urbanizing and the rate of urbanization is expected to climb steeply over the next few decades. McKinsey Global Institute (2010) predicts an urban population of 590 million by 2030, as compared to 340 million in 2008. For India to be more inclusive, it is imperative that both economic growth and urban population be more equitably distributed. Therefore, any meaningful long-term vision for India would be incomplete without planning for the cities of tomorrow.

Urbanization in India has occurred more slowly than in other developing countries and the proportion of the population in urban areas has been only 28 per cent based on the 2001 census. The pace of urbanization is now set to accelerate as the country sets to a more rapid growth. Economic reform has already unleashed investment and growth offering its citizens rich opportunities. Surging growth and employment in cities will prove a powerful magnet. 300 million Indians currently live in towns and cities. Within 20-25 years, another 300 million people will get added to Indian towns and cities. This urban expansion will happen at a speed quite unlike anything that India has seen before. It took nearly forty years for India's urban population to rise by 230 million. It could take only half the time to add the next 250 million. If not well managed, this inevitable increase in India's urban population will place enormous stress on the system

The speed of urbanization poses an unprecedented managerial and policy challenge—yet India has not engaged in a national discussion about how to handle the seismic shift in the makeup of the nation.

Urban India today is "distributed" in shape—with a diverse range of large and small cities spread widely around the nation. India will probably continue on a path of distributed model of urbanization because this suits its federal structure and helps to ensure that migration flows aren't unbalanced toward any particular city or cities.

As the urban population and incomes increase, demand for every key service such as water, transportation, sewage treatment, low income housing will increase five-to seven fold in cities of every size and type. And if India continues on its current path, urban infrastructure will fall woefully short of what is necessary to sustain prosperous cities.

Recent reports suggest that India spends $17 per capita per year in urban infrastructure, whereas most benchmarks suggest a requirement $100. The investment required for building urban infrastructure in India, over the next 20 years, is estimated at approximately US$ 1 trillion.

There has been an incomplete devolution of functions to the elected bodies as per 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, possibly because of the unwillingness of the state governments. In addition, very few Indian cities have 2030 master plans that take into account peak transportation loads, requirements for low-income affordable housing and climate change. In general, the capacity to execute the urban reforms and projects at the municipal and state level has been historically inadequate.

Social effects of Urbanization

Urbanization has far reaching effects on larger societal process and structures. Following are some of the sections-

Family and kinship Urbanization affects not only the family structure but also intra and inter-family relations, as well as the functions the family performs. With urbanization, there is a disruption of the bonds of community and the migrant faces the problem to replace old relationships with new ones and to find a satisfactory means of continuing relationship with those left behind.

I.P. Desai (1964) showed that though the structure of urban family is changing, the spirit of individualism is not growing in the families. He found that 74 percent families were residentially nuclear but functionally and in property joint, and 21 percent were joint in residence and functioning as well as in property and 5 percent families were nuclear.

Aileen Ross (1962) in her study of 157 Hindu families belonging to middle and upper classes in Bangalore found that

1. about 60 percent of the families are nuclear
2. the trend today is towards a break with the traditional joint family form into the nuclear family form into the nuclear family unit.
3. Small joint family is now the most typical form of family life in urban India.
4. Relations with one's distant kin are weakening or breaking.

Urbanization and Caste: It is generally held that caste is a rural phenomenon whereas class is urban and that with urbanization, caste transforms itself into class. But it is necessary to note that the caste system exists in cities as much as it does in villages although there are significant organizational differences.

Caste identity tends to diminish with urbanization, education and the development of an orientation towards individual achievement and modern status symbols. **It has been pointed out that among the westernized elite, class ties are much more important than caste ties.**

However caste system continues to persist and exert its influence in some sectors of urban social life while it has changed its form in some other sectors. Caste solidarity is not as strong as in urban areas as in the rural areas. Caste panchayats are very weak in cities. There exists a dichotomy between workplace and domestic situation and both caste and class situations co-exist.

Urbanization and the Status of Women: Women constitute an important section of rural urban migrants. They migrate at the time of marriage and also when they are potential workers in the place of destination. While middle class women get employed in white collar jobs and professions, lower class women find jobs in the informal sector. Women are also found in the formal sector as industrial workers.

Increasing number of women have taken to white-collar jobs and entered different professions. These professions were instrumental in enhancing the social and economic status of women, thereby meaning increased and rigorous hours of work, professional loyalty along with increased autonomy. The traditional and cultural institutions remaining the same, crises of values and a confusion of norms have finally resulted. The personally and socially enlightened woman is forced to perform dual roles - social and professional.

The status of urban women, because of being comparatively educated and liberal, is higher than that of rural women. However in the labour market, women continue to be in a disadvantaged situation.

Problems of Urbanization

The patterns of urbanization in India has been marked by regional and interstate diversities, large scale rural to urban migration, insufficient infrastructural facilities, growth of slums and other allied problems. Some of the important problems of urbanization faced in different parts of India are as follows:

Housing and Slums

There is acute shortage of housing in urban areas and much of the available accommodation is of sub-standard quality. This problem has tended to worsen over the years due to rapid increase in population, fast rate of urbanization and proportionately inadequate addition to the housing stock.

With large scale migration to urban areas many find that the only option they have is substandard conditions of slums. Slums are characterized by sub-standard housing, overcrowding, lack of electrification, ventilation, sanitation, roads and drinking water facilities. They have been the breeding ground of diseases, environmental pollution, demoralization and many social tensions.

With India's slum population standing at nearly 40%, slum dwellers form 44% of population in Delhi,45% in Mumbai, 42% in Calcutta and 39% in Chennai.

Over Crowding

In major cities in India like Mumbai, Kolkata, Pune and Kanpur, somewhere between 85% and 90% of households lives in one or two rooms. In some homes, five to six persons live in one room. Over-crowding encourages deviant behavior, spreads diseases and creates conditions for mental illness, alcoholism and riots. One effect of dense urban living is people's apathy and indifference.

Water supply, Drainage and Sanitation

No city has round the clock water supply in India. Intermittent supply results in a vacuum being created in empty water lines which often suck in pollutants through leaking joints. Many small towns have no main water supply at all and are dependent on the wells. Drainage situation is equally bad. Because of the non-existence of a drainage system, large pools of stagnant water can be seen in city even in summer months.

Removing garbage, cleaning drains and unclogging sewers are the main jobs of municipalities and municipal corporations in Indian cities. There is a total lack of motivation to tackle the basic sanitation needs of the cities. The spread of slums in congested urban areas and lack of civic sense among the settlers in these slums further adds to the growing mound of filth and diseases.

Transportation and Traffic

Absence of planned and adequate arrangements for traffic and transport is another problem in urban centres in India. Majority of people use buses and tempos, while a few use rail as transit system. The increasing number of two-wheelers and cars make the traffic problem worse. They cause air pollution as well. Moreover, the number of buses plying the metropolitan cities is not adequate and commuters have to spend long hours to travel.

Pollution

Our towns and cities are major polluters of the environment. Several cities discharge 40 to 60 percent of their entire sewage and industrial effluents untreated into the nearby rivers. Urban industry pollutes the atmosphere with smoke and toxic gases from its chimneys. All these, increases the chances of diseases among the people living in the urban centres. According to UNICEF, lakhs of urban children die or suffer from diarrhoea, tetanus, measles etc. because of poor sanitary conditions and water contamination. As a long-term remedy, what is needed is using new techniques of waste collection, new technology for garbage-disposal and fundamental change in the municipal infrastructure and land-use planning.

The above is not an exhaustive list of the problems of urbanization. A whole lot of other problems including increasing rate of crime in the cities, increasing old age population and absence of social security for them, enhanced role and sphere of market has led to the poor and marginalized suffering the most. Studies have also shown that stress levels are found high in cities, which in turn has deleterious impact on the health of the people.

Urbanization and Governance

Governance forms an integral part of Urbanization. Governance is the weakest and most crucial link which needs to be repaired to bring about the urban transformation so urgently needed in India. Financing the large sums required to meet the investment needs of urban infrastructure is crucially dependent on the reform of institutions and the capacity of those who run the institutions for service delivery and revenue generation. It is seen that large expenditures on Indian cities and towns have to be combined with better governance structures, strong political and administrative will to collect taxes and user charges, and improved capacity to deliver. Cities must be empowered, financially strengthened, and efficiently governed to respond to the needs of their citizens and to contribute to the growth momentum.

The municipal entities need to be strengthened as local governments with 'own' sources of revenue, predictable formula-based transfers from state governments, and other transfers from the Government of India and state governments to help them discharge the larger responsibilities assigned to them by the 74th Constitutional Amendment. Improved tax revenues combined with rational user charges will enable cities to leverage their own resources to incur debt and also access new forms of financing through public private partnership (PPP). Only then can they augment the urban infrastructure base, provide improved quality of services on a sustainable basis to their residents, and contribute to the growth momentum of the Indian economy.

Administrative reforms commission in its 6th report mentioned measures to strengthen the urban governance. Some of its important recommendations are-

   a) Urban local bodies should be given responsibility for water supply and distribution in their territorial jurisdiction whether based on their own source or collaborative arrangements with other service providers.
   b) Sanitation, as a matter of hygiene and public health, must be given priority and emphasis in all urban areas. In all towns, advance action for laying down adequate infrastructure should be taken to avoid insufficiency of services.
   c) Community participation and co-production of services should be encouraged by municipal bodies. This should be supplemented by awareness generation.
   d) In all towns and cities with a population above one lakh, the possibility of taking up PPP projects for collection and disposal of garbage may be explored.
   e) Municipal bodies should be encouraged to take responsibility of power distribution in their area.
   f) Urban Transport Authorities, to be called Unified Metropolitan Transport Authorities in the Metropolitan Corporations, should be set up in cities with population over one million within one year, for coordinated planning and implementation of urban transport solutions with an overriding priority to public transport.

Way forward

India needs to work on several areas to manage its urbanization: The following are perhaps the most important: Inclusive cities, funding, planning, capacity building and low-income housing India also needs to start a political process where the urban issues are debated with evolution of meaningful solutions:

Inclusive Cities The poor and lower income groups must be brought into the mainstream in cities. Regulations intended to manage densities and discourage migration both limit the supply of land *and* require many households to consume more land than they would choose. This drives urban sprawl and pushes up the price of land and the cost of service delivery for all. High standards for parking, coverage limits, setbacks, elevators, road widths, reservations for health centers schools etc. (often not used) prevent the poor from choosing how much to consume of the costliest resource (urban land) to put a roof over their heads, and comply with legal requirements.

Financing: Devolution has to be supported by more reforms in urban financing that will reduce cities' dependence on the Centre and the states and unleash internal revenue sources. Consistent with most international examples, there are several sources of funding that Indian cities could tap into, to a far greater

extent than today: Monetizing land assets; higher collection of property taxes, user charges that reflect costs; debt and public-private partnerships (PPPs); and central/state government funding. However, internal funding alone will not be enough, even in large cities. A portion has to come from the central and state governments.

Planning: India needs to make urban planning a central, respected function, investing in skilled people, rigorous fact base and innovative urban form. This can be done through a "cascaded" planning structure in which large cities have 40-year and 20-year plans at the metropolitan level that are binding on municipal development plans. Central to planning in any city is the optimal allocation of space, especially land use and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) planning. Both should focus on linking public transportation with zoning for affordable houses for low-income groups. These plans need to be detailed, comprehensive, and enforceable.

Local capacity building: A real step-up in the capabilities and expertise of urban local bodies will be critical to devolution and improvement of service delivery. Reforms will have to address the development of professional managers for urban management functions, who are in short supply and will be required in large numbers. New innovative approaches will have to be explored to tap into the expertise available in the private and social sectors.

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