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Indian Society

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Indian Society

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CHAPTER 5

URBANIZATION

5.1 Introduction

Urbanization is the process by which large numbers of people become permanently concentrated in relatively small areas, forming cities. Urbanization is closely linked to modernization, industrialization and the sociological process of rationalization. Urbanization is not merely a modern phenomenon, but a rapid and historic transformation of human social roots on a global scale, whereby predominantly rural culture is being rapidly replaced by predominantly urban culture.

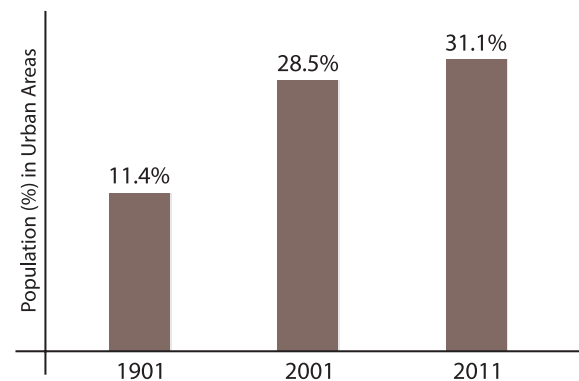
5.2 What is Urbanization?

Urbanization refers to the 'population shift' from rural to urban areas (cities) and the ways in which societies adapt to this change (urban way of living). The definition of what constitutes a city changes from time to time and place to place, but it is most usual to explain, urbanization as a matter of two sense :

Demographic and Sociological.

Demographically, the focus is on the size and density of population and nature of work of the majority of the adult population.

Sociologically, the focus is on heterogeneity, impersonality, interdependence and the quality of life in the society.



Urbanization in Demographic sense	
As per the Census of India	<p>For the Census of India 2011, the definition of urban area is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee, etc. (these towns are known as statutory towns) 2. All other places which satisfied the following criteria: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A minimum population of 5,000; (b) At least 75 per cent of the male main working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and (c) A density of population of at least 400 persons per sq. km (these towns are known as Census towns).
Conurbation	<p>A cluster of cities and towns forming a continuous network—may include even larger numbers of people.</p> <p>Emerging Conurbations in India: Mumbai to Ahmedabad covering Anand, Vadodara, Surat, Valsad and extending up to Pune.</p>
Megalopolis	<p>A megalopolis is typically defined as a chain of roughly adjacent metropolitan areas, which may be somewhat separated or may merge into a continuous urban region.</p> <p>The National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi is an example of Megalopolis in India.</p>
Global city	<p>Global city, an urban centre that enjoys significant competitive advantages and that serves as a hub within a globalized economic system. Eg. Mumbai</p>

5.3 The Mechanism of Social Change by Urbanization



5.4 Social Effects of Urbanization in India

5.4.1 Family and kinship

A. On Family Structure:

- **Change in family Size:** The urban joint family is gradually replaced by nuclear family. In India, the reduction of the family size could be attributed partly to economic difficulties, low levels of income, the high cost of living, the costs of education of children and the desire to maintain a better standard of living, which is best achieved within the more affordable smaller size family. Consequently, the nuclear family with its Parents and children become the model of society and soon ruled out the traditional, extended family usually constituting three generations.

However, with the rise in dual career families, there is trend towards elderly moving in urban nuclear families to take care of children.

- **Female headed households** have become a steadily growing phenomenon and increasing trend in India. A considerable proportion of unions are disrupted suddenly for reasons such as desertion, separation or divorce. Those women who are divorced at latter ages mostly remain single for the rest of their lives and live with their dependents. Further, due to inter-state migration, particularly male migration, female headed household is visible at rural areas.

- **Patriarchal family** is replaced by the “**egalitarian family**” where wife enjoys nearly equal power as the husbands. This symmetry, in the role of husband and wife’s, can be attributed to the increasing participation of women in the workforce, and subsequent role in decision making.
- **Change in fertility due to urbanization:** The family form of labour became redundant, as the economic contribution from the children in a family decreased, because of a move away from agriculture, the need for large numbers of children decreased. Improvements in health care and child survival also contributed. The emphasis was on the quality of life rather than the quantity of children, a new concept added to family values. Total fertility rate has reached 2.0 in India.

B. On Family Role

- **Social capital:** Traditionally, family capital stayed undivided, the maintenance of the family line was guaranteed and customs and tradition were transmitted from one generation to the next. But urbanization, led to a decline in authority among heads of households, and stimulated children to leave the household at an early age. Households broke up, family lines were not continued, particularly with the rise of specialized institution like schools and financing agencies.
- **Value transfer:** In traditional societies, family was an important institution for value impartation and role allocation. But with onset urbanization, specialized institution, such as school, replaced this system of value impartation consequently weakening the transfer of value in future generation. This can be seen in increasing assertion in marriage choices by the young generation.
- **Cooperative families:** The existence of institution of families as a co-operative and support institution, broke up in the wake of urbanization.

5.4.2 Urbanisation and Caste

Caste identity tends to diminish with urbanization, education and the development of an orientation towards individual achievement and modern status symbols. Carpooling, dining in restaurants, sharing public parks, public transportation, inter-caste marriages etc shows decreased role of caste in the urban way of life. But the vitality of caste can still be seen in :

- **Exclusionary urbanisation:** urbanization process has an inbuilt screening system, which is picking up people from relatively higher economic and social strata. Generally, higher caste people enjoy the urban benefits more than subaltern groupings in India.

- Caste as a basis for organising trade union like associations, which serves as *interest groups*, which protect the rights and interest of its caste members.
- Social interaction in urban settlements is marked by a high degree of informality and caste and kinship are major basis of such participation. This informality applies to religion as well, where one can see.
- With the advancement of critical space offered by the social media in urban centres, which also raised the level of electoral consciousness, identities, particularly caste, became an **instrument for electoral mobilization**.
- Caste as system may be declining in urban centres but as identity is getting momentum eg. Jat movement, Patidar movement.

5.4.3 Urbanization and Women

Urbanization is often associated with greater independence and opportunity for women – but also with high risks of violence and constraints on employment, mobility and leadership that reflect deep gender-based inequalities.

- Urbanization brought an alleged change in women's life which was guided by *affective individualism*. The term affective individualism is applied to this process, being the formation of marriage ties on the basis of personal attraction, guided by norms of romantic attachment. Resultantly, urbanized society is moving

towards an era of “*plastic sexuality*”; “Plastic” refers to the malleability of erotic expression, in terms of both individual choice and frameworks of social norms. “Flexible sexuality” is argued to emerge in the context of the social changes in due to urbanization. It stands in contrast to the features associated with modernist sexuality, conceptualized as fixed, by biology or by social norms. “Fixed sexuality” is associated with the binaries of modernity – either heterosexual or homosexual, either marital or extramarital either committed or promiscuous, either normal or perverse. This is evident from the fact love marriages, and cohabitation is common in urban centres.

- The ‘diversification of occupation’ has given women a lot of economic freedom, thus reducing the dependency on the family ecosystem. The economic independence also resulted in decreasing family sizes.
- Access to urban facility drives down rates of child marriage, female genital mutilation and other forms of gender-based violence. “The urban environment brings in different values, different cultures and systems. If well-planned it enables women and girls to have better access to education and health services.
- Rise of pink colour occupation in urban centre.

5.4.4 Urbanization and Migration

Migration is cause as well as consequence of urbanisation. Migration is the demographic process that links rural to

The Paradox of India urbanisation

- Global and Indian experiences (across states) show that productivity and growth are strongly correlated with urbanization. Given that urban productivity is much higher than rural, a shift in labour force from rural to urban activities is a key source of growth. International evidence also suggests that allowing existing urban agglomerations to grow may be a more efficient strategy than creating new urban areas.
- There are three economic explanations for the link between urbanization and productivity.
 - ❖ First, it deepens local product and labour markets, leading to greater competition and efficiency.
 - ❖ Second, it permits more specialization and division of labour and, hence, productivity improvements.
 - ❖ Third, it enables greater learning at all levels of workers, and better technology adoption and innovation. Also, urbanization lowers transaction and logistical costs, and permits greater economies of scale and scope, all of which contribute to growth.

But What explains political aversion to rural-urban migration?

- ❖ In a country where political success is driven by managing the 3Cs of Indian society—caste, community and class—no incumbent political leader would like to see any uncontrolled change in the social configuration of the constituency and, therefore, of the winning coalition. Migration causes this both in the originating villages and destination towns.
- ❖ 80% of Indian urban growth is organic in that it arises from three predominant sources—
 - (a) Natural population growth;
 - (b) Absorption of neighbouring villages; and
 - (c) Designating existing villages as “census towns”.

None of these involve spatial movement of people and, hence, do not alter the social composition of constituencies. Migration accounts for the remaining 20%, most of which is for marriage.

urban areas, generating or spurring the growth of cities.

- Migration is changing the structure of the family, as the number of single parent household families increase in rural areas. These families are generally female household families due to male migration.
- As generally male members migrate to cities, this leads to feminization of workforce at rural level. This results in less negotiation powers of women. Further, this also results in violence against women in rural India.
- Migration also helps in getting urban facility at rural place. It has often been observed that migrants who return from the cities will not work in the conditions that they used to do before. This is known as **social remittance**. Social Remittances — are a set of skills, ideas and practices imbibed by a person in time, that begin to reflect in his or her personality and way of life; in short, it's the social impact of migration that leads to social development. Migrants continually transfer these additional remittances through conversations with their families back home, through various medium when they are vacationing in their home or return forever after retirement. This has changed the condition at rural India.
- With migration, the number of rural-urban fringes, are on the rise. Rural-urban fringe are an area (for eg. Peri-urban areas) with distinctive characteristics which is only partly assimilated in to the urban complex and which is still partly rural. But with time it results in more unplanned urbanization. Further, the social conditions as such places includes the characteristic of both urban and rural areas. This often results in conflict between these two values. For instance, educating the girl child is urban value in itself, but when education brings aspiration in such children. But when these children assert themselves, it generates conflict which sometimes results in honour-killing type of scenario.

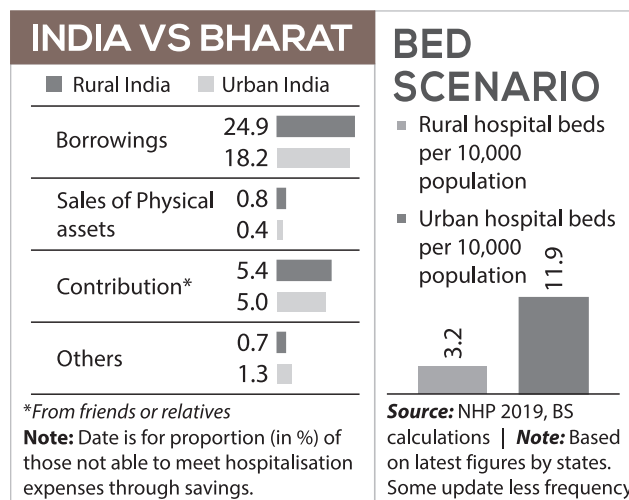
5.4.5 Urbanization and Health

Social and economic conditions and their effects on people's lives determine their risk of illness and the actions taken to prevent them becoming ill or treat illness when it occurs. For instance urban population living in slums or migrants living in congested habitations is more prone to health risks and infections as seen during Covid-19 pandemic.

India's health system faces the ongoing challenge of responding to the needs of the most disadvantaged members of Indian society. Despite progress in improving access to health care, inequalities by socioeconomic status, geography and gender continue to persist. This is compounded by high out-of-pocket expenditures, with the

rising financial burden of health care falling overwhelming on private households, which account for more than three-quarter of health spending in India. Health expenditures are responsible for more than half of Indian households falling into poverty; the impact of this has been increasing pushing around 39 million Indians into poverty each year.

This is generally known as Social gradient to health. The social gradient in health refers to the fact that inequalities in population health status are related to inequalities in social status.



5.4.6 Urbanization and Identity

- Urban areas are characterized by the absence of social network like caste or regional identities. But these gap are generally filled with larger social identities such as religion. Moreover religion becomes a medium for electoral mobilization. This develops a chasm between various religious groupings, manifested in the increasing communal incidences across India.
- Urbanization, of course, heralds a host of challenges. These include social alienation, overcrowding, income inequality, inflationary tendencies, and environmental degradation. Growth may be driven by sectors like construction, fuelling real estate bubbles that can threaten national and even regional economies. Meanwhile, the growing power of cities can perpetuate urban and rural divides, providing fodder for populist nationalism. The recent upsurge in anti-globalization voices manifests this fact. Due to globalization, a significant part of the urban population is finding it hard to make ends meet. This is generating hyper-nationalism against the perceived losses suffered by globalization.
- In such case the, mutual dependence can decrease such resentment. In the global context, such

dependence is created by the global cities. Global society, fosters cultural diversity, information sharing and political engagement, notable markers in a deeply polarized national society. People here are of multiple identities and reducible to no single adjective.

Growth of Tier 2 cities and rise of a new middle class with an emphasis on the culture of consumption

According to the government, cities with a population in the range of 50,000 to 100,000 are classified as tier 2 cities. In India, examples of tier-2 cities are Ayodhya, Kurnool, Indore, etc. The underlying reason for the growth of these cities is often attributed to the culture of consumerism adopted by the rising and aspiring middle class.

1. Increasing salaries: The salaries of individuals are increasing, creating an increased demand for goods and services of not just essential goods but goods generally considered as a luxury. The attitude has shifted from reusing items to buying new products creating demand.
2. Expansion of markets: Markets are now shifting from providing goods and services which are considered necessities to providing goods and services which are addressing pleasure and mental peace. Eg: Zumba classes, yoga centers.
3. Mall culture: In small cities also, malls are blooming up delivering various products under one roof.
4. E-marketplaces: The comfort of shopping while sitting at home is enjoyed by the individuals while surfing online marketplaces like Amazon, Meesho, etc.
5. Change in eating habits: With the availability of processed food and fast food items and changed job pattern, people are spending much on dining outside and canned food.

5.4.7 Urbanization and Environment

Urbanization can produce dystopic "cities without growth" debilitated by pollution, crime and inequalities. Mumbai is one such cautionary example.

- The main cause of degradation of the environment is rapid unplanned urbanization because of all industries, which release GHGs, located in urban area. Urban areas are the main sources of anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels for industrial processes; transportation of people and goods etc. Moreover, there is issue of environmental pollution due to vehicular emissions, construction activities etc. It has often been seen that *remote* areas are at the receiving end of pollution created and generated by *satellite* cities.

- It can be argued that the air pollution is increasing the frequency of non-communicable diseases in India, thus throwing already impoverished people in vicious cycle of poverty.
- Additionally, there is issue of solid waste generated by satellite cities, which are dumped by authority in peripheral areas. For example, there is a riot like situation in Mavallipura, a remote area in Karnataka, on the question of solid waste dumping by the authorities.
- Depletion of natural resources e.g., water scarcity in Bengaluru.
- *Urban flooding* in cities like Pune, Hyderabad has emerged as a major hazard.
- Whereas, Delhi NCR has become a gas chamber

5.4.8 Urbanization and Inequality

- Large cities are places that disproportionately reward the most talented people (the superstars) and disproportionately fail the least talented. In a nutshell, larger cities provide incentives for the most able to self-select into activities that offer high payoffs to the successful.

However, the risk of failure associated with those activities also increases because workers in larger cities compete against more and better rivals. However, this reward is based on ascriptive criterion in many cases.

- Disproportionate rewards for the most skilled – and failure for the less skilled – then drives income inequality. Both channels are stronger in larger cities, thus establishing the positive link between city size and inequality, even when abstracting from differences in industry composition and educational attainment. Due to this, globalization is creating conditions for relative deprivation across the world.

5.4.9 Urbanization and Crime

The conditions of urbanization creates anomie of infinite aspiration. Lack of resources, forces people in many conditions to take the route of crime for gratification of such needs. In many cases the limitations of dual career families, and the social conditions force many children toward delinquency. This is the reason for increasing crime in the society.

- A crime prone-society, reduces the free movement of its inhabitant, thus reduces the gains of urbanization.
- Cyber Crime has also emerged as major threat to security in tech enabled-cities.
- Urban center has become a hot bed of drug abuse eg. Mumbai, Delhi and Surat.

5.5 Unplanned urbanization: Rise of Slum Society

- As most of the urbanization in India is unplanned, slum are growing at disproportionate rates. These areas become the centre of populism and crime in urban centres. Moreover, the worldview the people inhabiting these parts are limited to making the ends meet, forgoing the benefits of differed gratification.
- Further, the overburdened conditions of urbanization in India is creating the conditions of sub-urbanization. In suburbanization people move towards the peripheral town for residence.
- This also results into environmental hazards, traffic problems and high cost of living.

5.6 Way Forward

- Successful urban governance demands attention to diversity. Effective planners must develop the legal, communication, transportation and housing infrastructure with which to gather a critical mass of capital and creativity in today's high-tech era.
- **Pragmatic urbanites**, in short, learn to share space with people unlike themselves. In the process, they experience "iterative" interactions, or repeat exchanges that transform who they are and how they identify themselves. As identities collide and elide in this urban context, new people emerge who are neither "us" nor "them." Such pluralistic sensibilities, in turn, compel citizens to challenge the demonization of difference so often promoted by nationalist politicians.
- At the World Urban Forum, the World Bank offered three big ideas that are essential for successfully implementing the New Urban Agenda:

- ❖ Financing the New Urban Agenda
- ❖ Promoting territorial development
- ❖ Enhancing urban resilience to climate change and disaster risks
- The announcement of a new urbanisation policy that seeks to rebuild Indian cities around clusters of human capital, instead of considering them simply as an agglomeration of land use, is a welcome transition. We need to empower our cities, with a focus on land policy reforms, granting urban local bodies the freedom to raise financing and enforce local land usage norms.
- Government of India has taken many initiatives like Smart City Mission, Amrut, HRIDAY, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana to enable the sustainable development of cities on lines of SDG- 11.

5.7 Urban Areas and Covid Pandemic

- **Reverse Migration:** due to closure of economic activities and lack of means for sustenance (wages, food, and accommodation) led to migrant workers in cities returning back to their villages. Further, MGNREGA and family support in time of crisis became the pull factors.
- **Susceptibility to infections:** in Mumbai over 40% of the city population live in slum areas where the actual population density is much higher than the average population density of these cities. Infection can easily and rapidly spread in the slum due to high pop density and lack of proper living conditions.
- According to report by Hunger Watch, The novel corona virus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has left the urban poor in India poorer, more hungry and with less nutrition than their rural counterparts.

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TRY SOME MAINS PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

1. Does urbanization lead to more segregation and/or marginalization of the poor in Indian metropolises? (2023)
2. How is the growth of Tier 2 cities related to the rise of a new middle class with an emphasis on the culture of consumption? (2022)
3. What are the environmental implications of the reclamation of the water bodies into urban land use? Explain with examples. (2021)
4. What are the main socio-economic implications arising out of the development of IT industries in major cities of India? (2021)
5. Discuss the various social problems which originated out of the speedy process of urbanization in India. (2013)