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URBAN INDIA - PROBLEMS AND POLICIES

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Abstract

The problems of urban areas in India are synonymous to those of the other countries in the world. Over-urbanisation in the overwhelming majority of towns and cities leads to adverse living conditions for the main bulk of water supply and sewerage being especially acute. Particularly unfavourable living conditions are in the congested parts of rapidly expanding and migrant attracting urban areas. Unorganised growth is accompanied by a sharp deterioration of sanitation, rapid sprawl of slums, shortage of transport facilities and water supply, withdrawal from agricultural use of valuable land in suburban areas and finally the growth of many social evils of a capitalist city (crime, begging, prostitution, etc.). It is clear that the urban growth and the demand for urban infrastructure is not shown balanced development. It is often felt that the growth of towns and cities in our country have been rather chaotic and not without a stress syndrome. These stresses are reflected in growing urban unrest, social tensions, proliferation of slums, congestion, environmental degradation, widespread poverty and lengthening queues for facilities such as education, health, transportation, water and other essential services.

Key Words: Over urbanisation, Migration, Slums, Urban Environment
Urban Floods,

All over the world, the great cities are in trouble. The problem of how to deal with the large urban concentrations of the modern world has not yet been solved. It is a problem which besets not only the advanced countries, but affects all areas with dense population and consequently large cities.

- Mrs. Hicks

Introduction:

Over urbanisation in one sense implies excessive urbanisation in relation to employment growth. It also means that the urban population has grown to such a large size that the cities fail to ensure a decent way of life to the urban-dwellers on account of excessive population pressure on civic amenities, housing, etc, In the Indian context, the idea of over urbanisation has been advanced on the grounds that (i). There is an imbalance between the levels of industrialization and urbanisation. (ii). the process of urbanisation takes away a lion's share of resources and thus, impinges upon the rate of the economic growth of society, (iii) The availability of civic amenities and facilities is so poor

that these have now reached a point of break-down and have become almost incapable of bearing further growing urban pressures.

Contrary to the idea of over-urbanisation, several scholars have stressed that India does not suffer from the problem of over urbanisation. In order to support this argument, it has been pointed out that the trends of industrial-urban growth in India, confirm to similar trends in as many as 80 percent of the developing societies. Secondly, it has also been argued that with the rise of urbanisation in India diversification of economy, new opportunities of employment have also considerably increased. This has also led to a rise in the levels of income of the urban dwellers.

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The analysis offered by the Institute of Urban Affairs does not support the idea that rapid urbanisation in India is causing a distortion in the allocation of resources between urban and rural areas, and thereby negatively affecting the pace of economic development. Their analysis shows that the real percent capital product in the country increased by about 50 percent during the period 1951 – 81. Meanwhile, the share of the primary sector in the Gross Domestic Product declined from around 60 percent in 1951, to less than 40 percent in 1981. This was accompanied by a rise in the share of the secondary and tertiary sectors. Moreover, the productivity of the manufacturing and service sector, representing urban segments, has risen much higher than that of the primary sector, representing the rural segment. In other words, the urban population in India is not the result of over-urbanisation, but largely due to a lack of effective urban policy governing the patterns of urbanisation.

The situation in our cities has become unmanageable and more alarming with the growing inequalities arising out of logs in adjustment to rapid and extensive urbanisation. A great many 'urban' dwellers and individual house holds are not integrated socially, economically or politically in urban life. Their low level of incomes; lack of education ; sub – standard living in slums and squatter settlements and increasing population concentrations ; overloading the community's environmental life support system, in the face of already existing backlog of services and amenities, have added new dimensions to the problem increasing the maintenance cost of urban development.

Urbanisation Problems and Issues:

The most important problems of present day urbanisation are :

- I. Informal growth of urban poor and city's environs, slums and squatter settlements;
- II. Unemployment and under - employment ;
- III. Inadequate expansion of educational facilities;
- IV. Public health and sanitation ;
- V. Inadequate housing and land control measures including land acquisition, development and disposal ;
- VI. Inadequate urban information base ;
- VII. Poor communication system ;
- VIII. Extremely inequitable access to resources including land and capital ;
- IX. Land allocation and land use for housing and other sectors of urban use;
- X. Inadequacy of transportation facilities ;
- XI. Lack of water including potable water supply ;
- XII. Lack of sewerage and drainage ;
- XIII. Improper solid waste disposal and management ;
- XIV. Conservation of basic resources ;
- XV. Control of pollution and epidemic diseases ;
- XVI. Maintenance of law and order and security of the people; and
- XVII. Encroachment of Urban water bodies and urban floods.

The basic issues which emerge from the problems of Urbanisation to which the urban planning process must address itself and indicated in brief as ;

- Urbanisation increases faster than industrialization and crosses a level which the degree of economic development does not justify.
- The towns and cities do not have the capacity to absorb increase of population at the rates being experienced at present or in the near foreseeable future.
- National urban economy cannot afford the investments needed to provide the environmental services and amenities of life support systems with a sound economic base to absorb population increases in cities.
- How 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 minimize the friction of space?
- How to improve the levels of living and conditions of human environment, in view of the low levels of per capital income and low levels of investible funds with the public exchequer ?
- How to absorb urban labour supply (both by way of migration as well as due to growth of local population) with increased earnings of the urban poor in the wake of a stagnant economy suffering from unemployment / underemployment ?

- What size groups of towns and cities would be most advantageous from economic and social viewpoint ?
- 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 ?
- How to suggest a most rational pattern of land use for the economic base of the city ?
- How to achieve an optimum and functionally integrated spatial structure of human settlement pattern to realize the overall goals of the society ?

Indian Urban Policy:

In India, it is recognized that urbanisation is not a trivial aspect of the process of economic development and social change. This has led to a demand that there ought to be a National policy statement on urbanisation, as it is true in matters of industrial development, population growth and education. Several reasons account for the lack of National policy on urbanisation, foremost among which have been the issues of overwhelming concern for self-sufficiency of villages and the inclusion of urbanisation in the state subjects of our constitution. However, in our efforts of planned development, the five year plan do reflect the general policies being followed for the management of the urban problems, which are assuming massive proportions due to unprecedented rise in the rate of urbanisation. It should be noted here that, by and large, the emphasis on these efforts has been towards the amelioration of the conditions of the poor and the lower income groups.

The National Housing and Habitant Policy, 1998, was formulated to address the issues of sustainable development of housing infrastructure through strong public - private partnership. Under a special action plan two million additional houses are targeted for construction every year.

The working group on housing has estimated the urban housing shortage at the beginning of the 12th plan at 10.2 million units. While this indicates an alarming number, it include the congestion needs of joints families, obsolescence and replace of old houses and upgrading of all the kachcha houses. However, the urban housing shortage in India for 2012-2017 was estimated to be 18.78 million houses and another estimate indicates that there are between 26-37 million households living in informal housing.

The National Slum Development Programme Central launched in 1996. Under this programme, additional Central assistance is being given to states / union territories for the development of urban slums. The Union Government approved in October 2001, an ambitious and first ever subsidy based housing scheme – Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojan (VAMBAY) for urban slum dwellers and the poor across the country. The scheme would have a quota of 50 per cent for SCs / STs 30 per cent for OBCs, 15 per cent for economically weaker sections, and 5 per cent for mentally retarded and physically disabled persons. An interesting feature of the scheme is that allotment of unit under it

will be either in the name of husband and wife jointly or just the female member of the household.

In pursuance of this vision of “Slum free India”, Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) was launched in June 2011 in two phases; the preparatory phase for a period of two years which ended in June 2013 and implementation phase. Central Government has approved the implementation phase for the period of 2013-2022.

According to Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Maharashtra had a population of 1.18 crore living in slums in 2011, followed by Andhra Pradesh at nearly 1.02 crore. At 2.20 crore, these two states accounted for more than one-third of India’s 6.55 crore slum population. Maharashtra’s 1.18 crore slum population was living in 25 lakh households, and Andhra Pradesh’s 1.02 crore in a little over 24 lakh households. All 125 statutory towns in Andhra Pradesh, and 189 of 256 in Maharashtra, were slum-reported. The highest number of slum-reported towns, however, was not in either of these states but Tamil Nadu, at 507 out of 721 statutory towns, followed by Madhya Pradesh at 303 out of 364 and Uttar Pradesh at 293 out of 648. Tamil Nadu had a slum population of 58 lakh, Madhya Pradesh had nearly 57 lakh and Uttar Pradesh had 62 lakh. In terms of slum population, however, next to Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh was West Bengal at 64 lakh. It had 122 slum-reported towns out of 129 statutory towns.

Urban Slum Population in the Selected States

Maharashtra	118 lakh
Andhra Pradesh	102 lakh
West Bengal	64 lakh
Uttar Pradesh	62 lakh
Tamil Nadu	58 lakh
Madhya Pradesh	57 lakh
Karnataka	33 lakh
Rajasthan	21 lakh
Chhattisgarh	19 lakh
Delhi	18 lakh

Source: Indian Express, 11.02.2019

The Manual on water supply and treatment, published in May, 1999 by the Central Public Health and Environment Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO), Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, Specifics norms and standards of municipal water supply for domestic and non-domestic needs such as institutional, commercial, firefighting and industrial requirements.

Accelerated Urban Water Supply Programme (AUWSP) is the scheme launched by Ministry of Urban Development of govt. of India. Under the scheme people of town having no water supply or completely no water, where the scheme is implemented. The AUWSP is a centrally sponsored scheme initiated with

the object of solving drinking problems in the towns having a population of less than 20,000 as per the Census. The scheme is funded by the Central and State Governments in a ratio of 50:50.

The Integrated Low-Cost Sanitation Scheme was envisaged to convert the existing dry latrines into low-cost, pour-flush latrines, The object of the scheme is to eliminate manual scavenging work. The scheme has helped in constructing or converting over 28 lakh latrines to liberate over 60000 scavengers as of 2010. While implementing the ILCS scheme, it was observed that the scheme did not perform well due to various reasons.

India, along with the world, is entering the last year of the decade 2011-20. During this decade, a string of programmes and schemes were launched and implemented in urban India. Whereas the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) that had been rolled out earlier, entered its closing phase, six new missions were launched by the Government of India. These were the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT); Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) – Housing for all (Urban), Smart Cities Mission (SCM), Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) and Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM). These were complemented by schemes to improve urban mobility. As a cluster, the missions aimed at improving the quality of life in urban areas and enhancing the delivery of urban services.

Towards the end of the decade, the Government of India also came out with the National Urban Policy Framework 2018 (NUPF) which outlined “an integrated and coherent approach towards the future of urban planning in India”. The NUPF was structured along two lines. Firstly, at the NUPF’s core lay ten sutras or philosophical principles. Secondly, the ten sutras were applied to ten functional areas of urban space and management.

- Cities are clusters of human capital;
- Cities require a ‘sense of place’;
- Not static Master Plans but evolving ecosystems;
- Build for density;
- Public spaces that encourage social interactions;
- Multi-modal public transport backbone;
- Environmental sustainability;
- Financially self-reliant;
- Cities require clear unified leadership; and
- Cities as engines of regional growth.

The NUPF recognized that urban development is a state subject. Hence, the states were encouraged to develop their state urban policies including implementation plans based on this national framework. The government of India assured its support in the development of such state policies. In the light of the Government of India’s urban efforts, it could be confidently stated that GoI had very discernibly reinforced its engagement with cities during the past decade.

Conclusion

Unchecked growth in urban population has put a great strain on the meager civic services available, besides leading to the break down of law and order and that the situation calls for massive investment and a much higher priority for urban development programmes. The galloping growth by itself is disturbing, but the skewed distribution of the urban population, scarcity of urban land resources to provide facilities for the ever increasing population and the inability of local bodies to raise resources have added to the gravity of the situation. The result is growth in slums, with sub – human living conditions in urban areas.

The worst difficulties occur in areas that have population of one million or over, rising steadily with the size of the population. No country has really succeeded in getting to grips with the socio – economic, or even with the sheer physical problems of catching up with the needs of modern communities of this size.

Mrs. Hicks

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