



# A HISTORICAL STUDY ON URBANIZATION OF INDIAN CONTEXT IN MODERN TIMES

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## Abstract:

*The concept of urbanization has a dual meaning demographically and sociologically. The demographic meaning refers to the increasing proportion of population in a country or a region that resides in cities. Sociologically, it refers to the behaviour, institutions and materialistic things that are identified as urban in origin and use. Urbanization is the movement of people from rural to urban areas, and the result is the growth of cities. It is also a process by which rural areas are transformed into urban areas. Urbanization is a process that has occurred, or is occurring, in nearly every part of the world that humans have inhabited. People move into cities to seek economic opportunities. Urbanization is measured by the percentage of people, who are urban in a society, a region or the world. Urbanization, therefore, summarizes the relationship between the total population and its urban component. That is, it is mostly used as a demographic indicator in the demographic sense, whereby, there is an increase in the urban population to the total population over a period of time.*

## Introduction:

India is largely a rural country, with about 72 per cent of its population living in rural villages. The growth of urban population as well as the pace of urbanization has been generally slow in India compared to the other Asian countries. The urban population rose from 17.3 per cent in 1951 to a mere 28 per cent in 2001 (provisional). An analysis of the growth rate of urban population in India in 1981-91 indicates that 58 per cent of this growth was due to natural increase (births minus deaths) and 42 per cent due to rural-urban migration. It may be understood that though urban population in India may be only 28 per cent, this seemingly low percentage is a large population, number-wise. Therefore, the quality of life in urban areas means the lives of a large number of people. Therefore, this population group requires urgent consideration.

In the urban areas, one can find a range of features like the loss of primary relationship and increasing secondary group relationship, voluntary associations, plurality of norms and values, weaker social control, increasing secularization and segmentary roles a greater division of labour, greater importance of the mass media and the tendency for the urbanites to treat each other instrumentally. Sociologists believe that all these are caused due to large number of population, which is heterogeneous, having come from various backgrounds. Thus, the denser, larger and heterogeneous of the community, the more accentuated are the characteristics of associated with the urban way of life. Another aspect is that in the social world, institutions and practices may

be accepted and continued for reasons other than those that originally brought them into existence and that accordingly the urban mode of life may be perpetuated under conditions quite foreign to those necessary for its origin.

### **Meaning and Definition of Urbanization:**

John Palen in demographic terms defines Urbanization as an increase in population concentration; organizationally it is an alteration in structure and functions:

Eldridge substantiates this view. According to him, urbanization involves two elements such as the multiplication of points of concentration and the increase in the size of individual concentration.

Thompson Warren in Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences states 'Urbanization is the movement of people from communities concerned chiefly or solely with agriculture to other communities, generally large whose activities are primarily concerned with the government, trade, manufacture or allied interests:

According to Anderson, 'Urbanization is not a one-way process, but it is a two way process. It involves not only movement from villages to cities and change from agricultural occupation to business, trade, service and profession, but it involves change in the migrants' attitudes, beliefs, values and behavior pattern: Thus, according to him, urbanization involves the following

1. Concentration of people at population densities higher than those associated with agricultural populations with only very rare exceptions on either side.
2. Population shift (migration) from rural to urban areas.
3. Occupational shift from agricultural to non-agricultural.
4. Land-use shift from agricultural to non-agricultural.

From the above definitions, one can conclude that sociologists meant urbanization as a process of diffusion of certain modernizing traits or characteristics in a population. It is often considered to be a causal factor of modernization. Thus, urbanization can be summarized as a process which reveals itself through temporal, spatial and spectral changes in demographic, social, economic, technological and environmental aspect of life in a given society (Mondal, 2019) (Maningding, 2017).

### **Review of Related Literature:**

According to historians, Jericho, which lies to the north of the Dead Sea, is the first ever developed city. About 8000 BCE, Jericho contained some 600 people, and by 4000 BCE, it was one of the numerous cities flourishing in the Fertile Crescent between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers in the present day Iraq and by 3000 BCE, along the Nile River in Egypt and the Indus River in India-Pakistan (Morris, 2013).

In course of time, some cities with a population of 50,000 became the centres of urban empires. Priest kings wielded absolute power over lesser nobles, administrators, artisans, soldiers and farmers. Slaves captured in military campaigns were used to build monuments like the pyramids in Egypt. These early cities were

theocratic, where the rulers had divine authority and were in essence, 'god kings.' The ancient city expanded from the southwest Asia through Greece to Europe (Gates & Yilmaz, 2011).

In 1800 BCE, urbanization in Europe was centred in the Mediterranean island of Civic. However, within few years, more than 100 cities developed in Greece, Athens being the most famous among them. As Greek civilization faded, the city of Rome grew to almost 1 million in habitants and became the centre of a vast empire, which not only established some of the major cities like Vienna, Paris and London, but also spread its language, arts and technology to the whole of Europe, northern Africa and Asia, including India (Clark, 2008).

The pre-industrial or pre-colonial urban centres in India had tended to be political at the core, their rise and fall often closely linked to the sponsoring political regime, though the addition of commercial and religious activities had given the urban centre to certain immunity from political vicissitudes (Bhagat, 2018).

These conditions heightened during the times of change from a pre-industrial society to an industrial one: It is at this firm that many new commercial enterprises were made possible, thus creating new jobs in dues. It is also a result of industrialization that farms became more mechanized, purling many labourers out of work. (Jaysawal & Saha, 2014)

Throughout the middle ages, steadily increasing commerce enriched a new urban middle class or bourgeoisie (French. meaning of the town). By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the power of the bourgeoisie challenged that of the hereditary nobility.

By about 1750, industrialization was underway in Europe, which led to the second urban revolution, first in Europe and then in North America Factories unleashed a tremendous productive power by making cities to grow to an unprecedented During this time, cities not only grew but also changed their shape from being planned ones in the broad, straight boulevards, etc., shapes to unplanned irregular shapes. The streets of these new cities grew haphazardly and in all directions accommodating the commercial traffic including the steam and electric trolleys. Before long the city life is no longer revolved around the cathedrals; instead, hushing central business districts arose, filled with banks, retail stores and the ever-taller office buildings.

The cities from then on focused on business leading to urbanism or the urban way of life. The increasingly crowded cities became impersonal, crime rate increased and class stratification became prominent, i.e., some rich people lived in grand style but for most men, women and children factory work proved exhausting and provided bare subsistence. Organized efforts by workers and other city dwellers to improve the civic conditions of the city led to legal regulations of the workplace, better housing and the right to vote or universal franchise. Public services such as water, sewage and electricity further enhanced urban living standards.

(General, 2001) Sociologists today categorize cities/towns in terms of the degree to which they have been industrialized. Thus, cities /towns can be folk, pre-literate, feudal, pre-industrial and urban industrial. However, cities still continue along on a continuum such a rural-urban continuum.

### **Origin of Towns and Cities: (Urbanization):**

Although cities have their own roots in the villages, they are not merely enlarged villages. The earlier cities, which grew along fertile river valleys in the Middle East and Asia, were an entirely new kind of society. Domestication of plants and animals in course of time provided material surplus, a third pre-condition for the growth of urban centres, i.e., cities developed when certain categories of work were no longer carried out by the people who worked the land, but by others who were freed from this obligation and who were supported by the surplus produced by the cultivators. This distinction created a stratified society of the ruling elite and subordinates. This new class of people focused their energies on making tools (for the new farming methods that developed out of the agricultural revolution), weapons and gathering wood for shelter/heat. These jobs were not associated with the survival of the group but were created because of the settlement. Sjoberg called a city 'a community of substantial size and population density that shelters a variety of non-agricultural specialists, including Literate elite' and Louis Wirth defined a city as 'a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals.' (IGNOU, 2017)

### **Consequences of Urbanization:**

Any consideration of the impact of urbanism must take into account many variables. The behaviour and values of persons who may be affected by urban influence the geographical location of the persons, whether residing in cities or the hinterlands: the effects on the political, economic and occupational organization of the cities or the hinterlands, his health, education and general welfare of individuals involved. It must also be kept in mind that the social and cultural systems of societies differ and that these differences invariably have a bearing on the interaction between a city and its hinterland.

The impact of urbanization can be seen as societies become increasingly urbanized, social emphasis is placed on achievement rather than on ascription. Urbanization has brought about many changes in various spheres of urban life, namely physical, social, psychological and cultural aspects. These aspects are elaborated here (Malik et al., 2013).

Industrialization has resulted in an increase in urban population, which creates further pressure on urban land. As a result, there is a dearth of space, and consequently congestion and overcrowding occur. The municipal authorities are now finding it difficult to even provide the basic amenities to the migrated and the existing population of the city. The basic amenities include consumer goods (food and water), shelter and protection from infectious diseases. Another major consequence of an increase in population is the imbalance created between demand and supply of goods and commodities. The prices rise exorbitantly due to inflation and lack of adequate supply.

If one looks from the individual migrant's view, it is true that cities provide opportunities, and also competition. All those who come in search of these opportunities may not succeed. The result is the growth of slums, vices, drug trafficking, prostitution, beggary and robbery.

## Suburbanization:

The continuous expansion of cities has intensified growth in the outer edges of the cities, where there is undeveloped and unoccupied land. This circumferential and radial growth has led to the growth of suburban areas. Suburbs are areas that were once villages and the cities in the spree of expansion have engulfed these villages. They are characterized by relatively low housing density. Suburbs can be identified from the fact that they are separated from the central city in the physical aspects but are also dependent on it for employment, services, goods and administration.

Suburbs have been differentiated based on their functions the residential suburbs and employment suburbs. The residential suburbs are those that provide only residential space to their inhabitants and these inhabitants commute to the urban centre for their livelihood whereas employment suburbs, which are also called satellite towns, are termed when some industrial complexes provide residences to their employees. Over a period of time, a township is built in this area thus creating a suburb.

The social interaction pattern in these suburbs depends on the type of suburb. In the residential suburb, people spend more time in travelling, hence they hardly have any time for social interaction; commuting or travelling may keep the earning member, who usually is the male member, away from home for a longer time. Therefore, women may assume important roles in suburban life. The values, standards, beliefs and preferences are different for the suburbanites when compared with the urbanites. The suburbanites tend to put family values above achievement and careers, and also are not so keen on accumulating wealth, whereas the inner city residents are capable of doing anything to become rich.

However, rapid increase in population is affecting the suburbs also. They are facing problems of an urban centre ranging from traffic congestion to poverty, increasing crime rates, especially theft, vandalism, air pollution, despoliation of the physical environment, housing problems and financial problems.

Whatever may be the problems, suburbanization seems to be a new trend. Unlike the early haphazard and unplanned suburbanization process, it may become more planned and achieve an orderly growth in the days to come (Sinha, S. K. and Shekhar, R., 2017).(Sudhira et al., 2004)

Increasing numbers of inhabitants in a settlement beyond certain limit and affect the relationship between them and the character of the city. The greater the number of individuals participating in a process of interaction, the greater is the potential of differentiation between them whereby the personal traits, the occupations, the cultural life and the ideas, and beliefs and values get widely separated.

These variations give rise to the spatial segregation of individuals. The bonds of kinship, neighbourliness and sentiments of living together for generations are absent among these people due to such diverse origin and backgrounds. In such circumstances, competition and formal control mechanisms substitute for the bonds of solidarity that hold a folk or a village society together.



Another important outcome of an increase in population and the consequent increase in density is that personal mutual acquaintanceship between inhabitants, which ordinarily involves an increase in a neighbourhood feeling, is lacking. Thus, the increase in numbers involves changed the character of the social relationship, the absence of anonymity and the segmentalization of human relationship. The high mobility in the urban life enables an individual to assume diverse roles: This, in turn, leads to instability and insecurity in the world at large. The city dweller thus is in a transitory habitat, does not generate binding traditions and sentiments and only rarely is found to be neighbourly. All these have led to the growth of a number of social problems.

### Summary and Conclusions:

Urbanization is the movement of people from rural to urban areas, and the resulting growth of cities. It is also a process by which rural areas become transformed into urban areas. The concept of urbanization has a dual meaning demographically and sociologically. The demographic meaning refers to the increasing proportion of population in a country or a region who reside in cities. Sociologically, it refers to the behaviour, institutions and material things that are identified as urban in origin and use. It is a social process, which is the cause and consequence of a change in the man's way of life in the urban milieu. The first pre-condition for urban development is a favourable ecology. The second pre-condition is the availability of food at the place of settlement. To satisfy this condition, advancement in technology is a must.

### References:

1. (Mondal, 2019) (Maningding, 2017)
2. Morris, 2013.
3. Gates & Yilmaz, 2011.
4. Bhagat, 2018.
5. Jaysawal & Saha, 2014.
6. IGNOU, 2017.
7. Malik et al., 2013.
8. Sinha, S. K. and Shekhar, R., 2017.
9. Sudhira et al., 2004.