

URBANIZATION – CAUSES AND ISSUES IN INDIA AND SMART CITIES

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"URBANIZATION IN INDIA IS A SLOW BUT SURE DEATH FOR HER VILLAGES AND VILLAGERS"

- MAHATMA GANDHI

Abstract

Urbanization means an increase in the percentage of the urban population to the total population. Urbanization takes place due to the movement/migration of people from rural areas to urban areas. A common characteristic of Indian society is urbanization. It is a process of population concentration in a specific territory. Three major factors have led to the growth of urbanization in India, they are population growth, rural-to-urban migration, and expansion of towns and cities. Urbanization in India has been increasing at a very fast speed since Independence. The causes of urbanization in India are industrialization, the spread of education, social factors, job opportunities, modernization rural-urban transformation. The issues of urbanization are overcrowding, joblessness, health, transport, garbage, sewage, housing and water problems, slums, squatter's environmental quality degradation, increase in urban crime rate. The Smart Cities Mission is a bold new initiative of the Government of India. Smart Cities must have an outstanding interest, connectivity, easy transportation, law and order which is dependable, and a dependable physical and social infrastructure. It must be connected to devices, apps, and transportation and needs to be concerned with data security and cyber efficiency. This promises a robust economy, improved amenities, and climate change resistance.

Keywords: Urbanization, Urban Growth, Population Migration, Smart Cities.

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas which leads to an increased population of people who stay in urban areas rather than rural areas. There are various causes of urbanization. There are various issues in urbanization. The Smart Cities Mission of the Government of India is to build more developed, hospitable communities that will give the residents urban conveniences enhanced by technological capabilities. A Smart City must have good internet connectivity, easy transport, reliable law and order, and a reliable infrastructure.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- (1) To understand the concept of urbanization.
- (2) To review the literature on Urbanization and Smart Cities.
- (3) To know the causes and issues of urbanization.
- (4) To know about the smart city concept.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is descriptive in nature and based on secondary data sourced from books, journals, research papers, websites, etc.

CONCEPT OF URBANIZATION

Urbanization is an increase in the percentage of the urban population to the total population. Urban growth means an increase in the total urban population. Urbanization takes place due to people moving from rural areas to urban areas and this normally takes place when a nation is still developing. The Indian Society has a common characteristic of urbanization. It is a process of population concentration in a particular/specific territory/area. Population increase, migration, and growth of towns and cities are the major reasons for urbanization.

India's urbanization increased after Independence at a very fast speed but, there are many problems in urbanization like sanitation, garbage disposal, slums and squatters, water, health, education, housing shortage, overcrowding, unemployment, poverty, pollution control, noise, air, water pollution, traffic congestion, and control, crime and juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, drug abuse, begging, corruption, drainage, sewage, environmental degradation, car parking problems, migration from rural areas to urban areas.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(1) **Mujumdar S and Kumari S. (2022)**, in their research paper "The Problems and Issues of Urbanization in India in Present Scenario" have stated that a major demographic transition is being seen by the third-world countries from a rural, agricultural community to an urban, industrial community. Severe environmental degradation has resulted due to a quick enhancement in economic development and urbanization. Urbanization has led to growing slums and squatters, and a lot of pressure is there on public utilities like roads, drainage, sewage, garbage disposal, sanitation, housing, transport, education, health, and electricity. Secondary data has been used.

(2) **Srikrishna G. (2017)**, in his research paper "A Study on Urbanisation in India – Issues and Challenges" stated after the independence of our country in 1947, in India urbanization took pace since a mixed economy was adopted by India, which means the co-existence of public sector and private sector. Indian urbanization is giving rise to many issues like slums, environmental damage, and urban areas people facing a low living standard. It studies the issues and challenges of urbanization. The study is a descriptive method using secondary data.

(3) **V. Venkatesham (2015)**, in his research paper "The Problems and Issues in Urbanization in India" has studied the history and causes of urbanization in India" has studied the history and causes of urbanization in India, the difficulty in urbanization in India. Urbanization is the growth of urban areas, due to rural migration and it is connected to modernization, industrialization, and nationalization.

(4) **Sandeep (2018)**, in his research paper, "Urbanization in India: A Study of Causes & Effects" has highlighted the urbanization concept, its causes, effects, and challenges. The research is descriptive and exploratory based on primary and secondary data.

(5) **Sultana, Nasim K., and Prasad C.B. (2021)**, in their research paper, "A Review of Smart Cities in India: Mission and Challenges", indicate the smart initiatives in urban management across India, Smart Cities' Mission and challenges for smart cities in India.

FACTORS / REASONS / CAUSES OF URBANIZATION

Urbanization is caused mainly due to the following factors:

(1) **Industrialization:**

The most important reason for urbanization is industrialization. Cities have grown due to the growth of industries. Due to industrialization, people moved from rural areas to urban areas, in search of jobs in industries, thereby enhancing job opportunities in industrial or urban areas. People are moving or migrating from rural areas to urban areas, on a very large scale because of the pressure of population on land and the shortage of resources in rural areas.

(2) **Social causes:**

Various social causes like attraction towards cities, an improved living standard, better facilities for education, and the importance of status or position in society encourage people to move from rural areas to urban areas.

(3) **Job Opportunities:**

The main occupation of the people in rural areas is agriculture. So, people rely mainly on agriculture for their livelihood. In the monsoon, Indian agriculture is a gamble. Rural people have to move to urban areas during drought conditions and natural calamities like earthquakes, floods, etc.

(4) **Education Spread**

Rural people have become more modernized due to an increase in the literacy rate among the rural masses.

(5) **Modernization:**

Rural people move to cities, due to comfortable life in cities, sophisticated technology, communication, transport, medical facilities, better infrastructure, etc.

(6) **Rural-Urban Transformation:**

The number of cities is increasing. Rural people who adopt the urban culture and do not stick to their unique rural culture. Rural people follow the material culture of people, in the urban areas. Rural-urban transformation can be seen in changes in dressing habits, women's enlightenment, active participation in politics, rural consumer increasing awareness, modern transport and communication like mobile phones, tabs, laptops, etc., modern technology adoption, development of infrastructure like roads, electricity, banks, post offices, etc., enhanced demand for sophisticated goods like cosmetics, color televisions, refrigerators, mixers and grinders, washing machines, geysers, air conditioners, vacuum cleaners, etc.

URBANIZATION ISSUES

Urbanization means a process of transformation of a society from a predominantly rural agricultural sector to a predominantly urban industrial sector. Rural people migrate to urban areas, in search of employment opportunities, education, health, and thereby an improvement in their standard of living and quality of life. Urbanization enhances the population living in urban areas and an enhancement in the population working in the non-agricultural sector.

There are various issues or problems or challenges related to urbanization in India, which are as follows:

(1) **Overcrowding:**

Urbanization leads to overcrowding and congestion in cities. Overcrowding means more people are located within a given space which is considered intolerable from the angle of health and safety. Overcrowding results from migration of people from rural areas to urban areas and the cities get crammed when they cross the limit of capacity. In an overcrowding situation, people compete over limited resources like water, electricity, transport, housing, and so on. Many metropolitan cities in India have overcrowding problems like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, etc.

(2) **Unemployment / Joblessness:**

Urbanization results in an unemployment problem. Rural people migrate to urban areas with the expectation of an improved living standard, employment opportunities, and better health care. With an increase in the city's population, it becomes very difficult to find and retain employment, which increases urban unemployment. In 2021, as per the National Statistical Organisation (NSO), the urban unemployment rate in India is 9.3%.

(3) **Problems of Health:**

In some areas, the health situation of the urban poor population is very bad in comparison to rural areas. Many people in cities die due to an absence of basic amenities like clean and safe drinking water, clean air, better health care, etc. Many people in cities suffer from diseases like asthma, food poisoning, cancer, allergies, infertility, diabetes, respiratory failure, and cardiovascular complications, and due to air and water pollution, people are dying.

(4) **Problems of Transport:**

As the towns increase in size, problems of transport aggravate and it becomes more complex. All the Indian cities are facing an acute type of transport problem. Due to insufficient road infrastructure, the problem of capacity overloading crops up, which leads to road accidents, and traffic congestion. The issue is further aggravated by to insufficient and over-congested public transport system.

(5) **Problem of Sewerage:**

Quick urbanization results in an unplanned and haphazard growth of cities. The majority of the cities face the problem of inefficient sewerage facilities. The majority of the cities suffer from the problem of a lack of

proper arrangements for sewage waste and it is directly drained into a nearby nullah or river or lake or in the sea, which is very common in Mumbai, Delhi, etc.

(6) **Slums and Squatters:**

The cost of living in urban areas is sky-high. The majority of the people who migrate from rural to urban areas, cannot afford such an expensive cost of living. The effect is an increase in the number of slums as safe havens, for those who cannot afford the increased rent costs and do not have sufficient money to buy new flats/houses in urban areas. The slums have the features of sub-standard housing, no electricity, no drinking water, sanitation, ventilation, overcrowding, and roads, and the slums are built generally on underdeveloped or undervalued lands. Slums and Squatters are the breeding grounds of communicable, non-communicable, infectious, waterborne diseases, crime, juvenile delinquency, demoralization, pollution of the environment, and various social problems. The largest (biggest) slum in Asia is Dharavi in Mumbai.

(7) **Environmental Quality Degradation:**

Urbanization results in environmental quality degradation. The people's congestion in less space decreases the air quality and there is contamination of water. When the population in the cities is increasing, there is an enhanced demand for housing, water, transport, food, etc. The land quality degrades due to forests and agricultural land destruction for constructing factories and buildings. Wastes of different types like domestic, and industrial, effluents are released in the nullahs, rivers, lakes, and sea. The increasing population in cities due to migration and the need to travel enhances the private vehicles demand, which run on fossil fuel which due to burning results in an increase in air pollution and decreases the air quality. Noise pollution is created by vehicles, large factories, industries, and processions with loudspeakers, which affect the health of human beings.

(8) **Problem of Garbage:**

In India, the hallmark of any city is the mounting garbage. The cities have an increased quantity of daily waste. There are no proper arrangements for garbage disposal in cities and the existing landfills are full to the brim, so they cannot take in, more garbage. The population staying in such areas, like Govandi in Mumbai are exposed to many health risks like malaria, dysentery, jaundice, plague, typhoid, diarrhea, and so on. The landfills are a breeding ground for diseases and many poisons leaking into the surrounding areas, leading to water and air pollution.

(9) **Problem of Water:**

In urban areas, there is an increased population growth. Waste becomes a very scarce resource. Water supply gets strained and insufficient to fulfill the needs of the increasing population. Due to an increase in water pollution, water problems are getting worse due to bad sewerage systems and the absence of preventive measures to manage local water pollution. A stage has been reached in Indian cities, where it is not possible to fulfill the sufficient water demand of the city people.

(10) **Urban crimes increased rate:**

Urbanization increases the crime problem. The fringe areas of the cities are the breeding ground for criminals. Most of the people who are poor and moved to urban areas from rural areas indulge in crimes like theft to fulfill their day-to-day requirements. Also, from well-to-do families, young people also commit crimes to earn fast money and to lead a lavish city life. The increased rate of crime disturbs the peace of the city and its tranquility. It makes the cities insecure for living especially for women.

CONCEPT OF SMART CITY

For every nation and every economy, cities are engines of growth. India's present population living in urban areas is nearly 31% and is a contributor of 63% to India's GDP as per Census 2011. Urban areas are expected to give dwellings to 40% of the population of India and contribute 75% of the GDP of India by 2030, speeding up the urbanization process. All this needs a comprehensive physical, social, economic, and institutional infrastructure development. This will improve the quality of life of the people, and attract people and investments in the city, setting a movement of a virtuous growth and development cycle. The step in that direction is the development of smart cities.

Smart cities are a concept, that is escaping a clear-cut, precise, and comprehensive definition. There is no definition of a smart city which is universally accepted. Smart city connotes different things to different people. The smart city concept varies from city to city, from country to country, depending upon the development level, willingness to change and reform, services, and aspirations of the city and residents. A smart city would have a different meaning in India than in any other country. There is no one way of defining a Smart City, even in India.

The Smart Cities Mission launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2015 is a bold new initiative of the Government of India for developing 100 smart cities for modern and resurgent India. The elements of core infrastructure in a Smart City are sufficient water supply guaranteed and uninterrupted electricity supply, affordable housing, especially for the poor, sustainable environment, health and education, efficient urban mobility and public transportation, sanitation including solid waste management, safety and security of citizens especially women, children and elderly people, good governance especially e-governance and participation of citizens. Regarding smart solutions, an illustrative list but not an exhaustive list includes waste, water and energy management, urban mobility, e-governance, and citizen services, and others which include skill awareness centers, telemedicine, and tele-education incubation/trade facilitation centers. The objective of Smart Cities Mission is to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life of the people by enabling local area development by harnessing technology especially technology that leads to smart outcomes. Area-based development will change existing areas (retrofit means city improvement and redevelopment means city renewal), including slums, into better-planned areas, resulting in improving the entire city, livability. New Greenfield areas will be developed around cities to accommodate the increasing urban population (City Extension). The use of smart city solutions will help cities use technology, data, and information to improve services and infrastructure. In this way, comprehensive development will enhance the quality of life, generate employment opportunities, and increase incomes for all, especially the poor, excluded, marginalized, underprivileged, the disadvantaged people, resulting in inclusive cities.

FEATURES OF SMART CITY

- (1) **Housing and inclusiveness** – enlarge housing opportunities for all.
- (2) **City Identity** based on its main economic activity like local cuisine, education, health, art, craft, culture, sports, goods, furniture, textile, dairy, hosiery, etc.
- (3) **Transport variety options promotion** – Transport Oriented Development (TOD), public transport, and last mile para transport connectivity.
- (4) **Open Spaces Preservation and Development** – Parks, playgrounds, and recreation spaces for improving the citizen's quality of life, curtailing the urban heat effects in areas, and promoting general eco-balance.
- (5) **Walkable Localities Creation** – Reducing congestion, air pollution, and resource depletion, boosting the local economy, promoting interactions, and ensuring security. The road network creation on refurbished for vehicles, public transport, cyclists, and pedestrians and the required administrative services are given within walking or cycling distance.
- (6) **Promoting Mixed land use in Area-based Developments** – Planning for unplanned areas including a range of compatible activities and land uses close to one another, for more efficient land use. The Government will help in some land use flexibility by building bylaws to adapt to change.
- (7) **Citizen-friendly and cost-effective governance** – Enhanced dependence on online services to have accountability and transparency, especially using mobiles to curtail services cost and give services avoiding the problem of going to municipal offices, forming e-groups for listening to people and getting feedback, and use online programs and activities monitoring, with the help of cyber tour of websites.
- (8) **Application of Smart Solutions to Infrastructure and Services** – in area-based development for making them better. For instance, making areas less vulnerable to disasters, using fewer resources, and giving cheaper services.

CONCLUSION

The pace of urbanization increased in India, after independence. Urbanization is a process of migration of people from rural areas to urban areas. There are various causes and issues of urbanization in India. The Smart Cities Mission launched by the Government of India is a bold new initiative.

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