

URBAN SCOPE AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN INDIA: A GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY

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Abstract

This theme paper of Urban Development and Urban Service Delivery is an exercise to deliberate on a contemporary issue to examine existing status on the subject and identify issues. The paper covers, urbanization pattern and prospects, management of urban development and services. This paper reaffirms that urbanization is inevitable, and directly linked with the process of economic development. The prospects of Urbanization associated with a balanced economic development to the country.

Key Words: Urbanization, Urban Service, Urban Landuse, Growth.

Introduction

There is a global consensus that urbanization and economic development are complementary to each other. In the year 1800 global urban population is being only 3 percent, in 1900, 13 percent and 30 percent in 1950 has crossed 50 percent mark in the year 2007. (UN, 2007) This journey of urbanization has witnessed a rapid pace of industrialization and expansion of business, industry and trade covering a sequence from Europe to America, Japan, (Newly Industrialized Countries), ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), China and South Asia. This dispersal of economic activities associated with competitive edge confirms that cities and towns are specifically known for their economic function.

Study Area

The India, situated north of the equator between 8°4' and 37°6' north latitude and 68°7' and 97°25' east longitude with a total area of 3,166,414 square kilometers. India measures 3,214 km from north to south and 2,933 km from east to west and a coastline of 7,517 km.

Objective

The present study has following specific objective. To study the urbanization of India. To study the growth of urbanization in India. To study the growth of urban population in India.

Database and Methodology

This study based on secondary data from published work by Central Ministry of Urban Development and Census of India-2011.

Indian Focus on Urban Development

The first time in the history of Indian democracy marked a new era of special attention on urbanization and related issues at national level by creation of a separate Ministry of Urban Development in 1985 in the Government of India. This was a result of global emphases and indigenous factors such as rapid pace of urbanization during 1971-81 and emerging public attention to various schemes and initiatives such as Rural Urban Relationship Committee

1963, Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act 1977, creation of HUDCO in 1977. Another milestone of turning point in 1985 was setting up of National Commission on Urbanization to have overall assessment of urban issues and potential strategies and creation of National Housing Bank to accelerate supply of housing.

Urbanization Pattern in India

Urban population of India is 377 million persons being 31.16 percent of total population of the country. Since independence census reveal a steady growth in urban population from 17.3 percent of India's population in 1951 to 31.16 per cent in 2011. In absolute terms the urban population has grown from 62.4 million to 377 million registering a little over six time increase in number of urban dwellers in the country between 1951 to 2011 (Table 1). Census data given in the Table 1 present welcome trends on the process of urbanization in the first decade of 21st Century. It has recorded that a) identification of highest ever number of settlements as census towns across the country being 2774 which indicate changes in the economic characteristics of human settlements and form a basis for further development of economies of scale and economies of settlements among the new urban centers. b) reversal of decline in the net increase in the percentage point of urban population over previous decade since 1981 which was declining from 3.4 in 1971-1981 to 2.4 in 1981-1991 and 2.1 in 1991-2001, c) 3.4 percentage point increase in 2001- 2011 which is equal to highest ever increase since independence and d) highest ever increase in the urban population in absolute terms being 9.1 million persons during first of the twenty first century decade. It is equally important to note that according to the recent projections by United Nation, India by the year 2050, will add another 497 million people in the population of its cities and towns, which is more than current urban population (377 million). These developments reaffirm that India is on a rapid pace of urbanization and 21st Century will see India transforming into urban majority society sooner than projected.

Table 1. Urbanization in India

| Growth of Population in India- 1951-2011 | | | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Year | Total population (including Assam and j&k) | | Urban population (including Assam and j&k) | | | Total no. of Cities & Town (Including J&K from 1951 to 1991 & Assam 1981) |
| | Total population (in crores) | Decadal Growth (Percent) | Urban population (in crores) | Decadal Growth (Percent) | Urban population (Percent) | |
| 1951 | 36.11 | | 6.24 | | 17.3 | 3035 |
| 1961 | 43.92 | 21.6 | 7.89 | 26.4 | 18 | 2657 |
| 1971 | 54.81 | 24.8 | 10.91 | 38.3 | 19.9 | 3081 |
| 1981 | 68.33 | 24.7 | 15.95 | 46.2 | 23.3 | 3891 |
| 1991 | 84.63 | 23.9 | 21.76 | 36.4 | 25.7 | 4615 |
| 2001 | 102.86 | 21.5 | 28.61 | 31.5 | 27.8 | 5161 |
| 2011 | 121.02 | 17.6 | 37.71 | 31.8 | 31.16 | 7935 |

Source: Census of India-2011 & TCPO, 2012.

State wise Urbanization

The urbanization level in India is low as compared to global average of 50 per cent as recorded in the year 2007, the state wise figures of urbanization vary considerably and also reveal that: (a) Eighteen states and union territories (UTs – hereafter referred as states) out of a total number of 35, have recorded higher levels of urbanization than the national average of 31.16 percent. (b) It shown higher levels of urbanization in Western coast and south India than the national average along with NCT of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal and Andaman Nicobar Islands. It is important to recall that Punjab, Haryana and West Bengal have historically or periodically developed a sound industrial base to attract interstate labour force for their economic activities whereas being the National Capital, National Capital Territory of Delhi has undergone rapid pace of expansion and economic development. (c) Remaining 17 states of India show lower levels of urbanization in a range of percent to 31 percent of their respective population than the national average. These include states in the northern, northeast, centre and eastern part of the country.

Urbanization and Economic Development

Urbanization and economic development are complementary to each other. The recent data on Indian status on urbanization and productivity as given in Table 2 also reaffirm the global observation. It may be pointed that: (a) All the states except for West Bengal with levels of urbanization higher than national average have per capita net state domestic product (PC-SDP) in a range higher than the national average (Rs. 46000) of net per capita national income in the year 2010. (b) Except for Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh other states having urbanization level lower than the national average show lower levels of PC-SDP. We may recall that these states have access to rich natural resources and royalty associated with their exploitation. (c) This data also shows that cities have economies of scale and economies of settlements. As well as economic development and urbanization are associated with each other.

Population Distribution of Metro Cities and other Towns

As compared to non-metro towns it is striking to note that million plus cities show their dominance in the net and proportionate increase in their population over previous decade. The data shows that millions plus cities have gone up from 35 to 53 during the same period registering an increase of 63 percent. Other cities and towns have gone up from 5126 to 7882 recording an increase by 54 percent during the ten years. Since the year 2001 absolute numbers the 90 million increase in the urban population in the country is distributed as 40 million among million plus cities and 50 million among other cities and towns which show an increase of 33 percent and 30 percent respectively. It is equally important to note that as against the increase of 33 per cent in the population over 2001, 53 metro cities account for nearly 45 per cent of increase in the urban population of India. Other cities and towns constitute 55 per cent of total addition in the urban population over the last census.

Distribution of Urban Centers:

State-wise urban centers which include statutory towns, census towns and their distribution among respective states. It is important to point out that statutory towns are those as notified by respective states and have local governments such as Municipal Corporation, Municipalities and Town (Nagar) Panchayats irrespective of their demographic characteristics. The census towns, on the other hand are identified on the basis of their population size, density and economic characteristics of labour force.

Table 2. Distribution of Urban Population

| Category of Cities/Town | Population (Million) | | | | | No. of Towns | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|------|------------------------|------------------|
| | 2001 | 2011 | Net increase (million) | percent increase | precent Share of net increase | 2001 | 2011 | Net increase (million) | percent increase |
| Million+ cities | 121 | 161 | 40 | 33 | 45 | 35 | 53 | 22 | 63 |
| Other cities & Towns | 166 | 216 | 50 | 30 | 55 | 5126 | 7882 | 2756 | 54 |
| Total Urban population/No. of towns | 207 | 377 | 90 | 31 | 100 | 5161 | 7935 | 2754 | 54 |

Source: Census of India 2011 and 2001.

Population Concentration among Class I Towns/Cities

Census 2011 also shows that majority of Urban Population live in Class-I Cities (with a population 100000 and above). It is important to note from Table 3 that on the whole Class I towns (including million cities) constitute a vast majority (70%) of urban population. Only 30 percent of population constitute in small and medium towns. It is noted that: There is a particular concentration of the urban population in large urban centers and existing city agglomerations (Class I urban centers with population over one lakh) accounting for 70 percent of the urban population. Across the States and urban centers there are variations in the spatial patterns of urbanization. Metropolitan cities can be classified under three main categories namely – (a) 10 million plus (b) 5 to 10 million and (c) 1-5 million population accounting of for 13 percent, 10 percent and 19 percent urban population of India, respectively (census 2011). Other 415 class I cities account for 28 percent of urban population. Remaining 7477 urban centers account for only 30 percent of urban population of India. The spatial polarization of the employment opportunities reflects by the pattern of population concentration in large urban centers. The states falling in the lower levels of urbanization than the national average needs to diversify in a larger context of particularly balanced regional development.

Table 3. Distribution of Size of Major Categories of towns & population.

| City Type | Nos. | population of 2011 (Million) | Share (%) |
|------------------------|------|------------------------------|-----------|
| 10 Million+ cities | 3 | 48.83 | 13 |
| 5 to 10 million cities | 5 | 36.2 | 10 |
| 1 to 5 million cities | 45 | 73.35 | 19 |
| Other class I cities | 415 | 105.59 | 28 |
| Small & medium towns | 7477 | 113.13 | 30 |
| All | 7935 | 377.1 | 100 |
| Source: Census 2011. | | | |

Conclusion

Data in Table 5 point out that first decade of 21st Century has paved a way for massive urbanization during next few decades. This will in due course transform India in to an urban majority society. While planning for development policies large number of census towns across the states confirm changes in the economic character of human settlements need to be given due cognizance. Therefore, suitable economic base needs to be created among 7477 small and medium sized towns. Which have potential to generate competitive edge due to their access to labour capacity within the town and their hinterland. We may recall that these urban centers can absorb a sizable part of surplus and unskilled labour provided their economic base is upgraded suitably. This may include arrangements for secondary education, vocational training and developing agro-based and related industries and other economics activities. We point out that as per Labour Report of Mckinsey & Co. the Global economy in the next twenty years will add 94 million surplus and unskilled labour out of which India will constitute 47 million or 50 percent of such labour. If corrective actions are not taken it can erode our competitive edge. In this regard small towns deserve spatial dispersal of economic activities as above. It is particularly important that some major lower per capita State Domestic Product states such as Bihar, Odisha, MP, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand etc. Have shown substantial increase in the towns which can be used to trigger urbanization process and economic development among these states. To absorb future urbanization to achieve a balanced urban growth across the country these centers should be viewed as Potential focus areas.

Table 4. Increase in cities and Towns

| Year | No. of cities and towns | Net increase | percent change |
|---|-------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1951 | 3035 | - | - |
| 1961 | 2657 | -378 | -12 |
| 1971 | 3081 | 424 | 16 |
| 1981 | 3891 | 810 | 26 |
| 1991 | 4615 | 724 | 19 |
| 2001 | 5161 | 546 | 12 |
| 2011 | 7935 | 2774 | 54 |
| Source: Table 1(In 1961 some towns of 1951 were declassified) | | | |

Urbanization, therefore, appears to be a positive force contributing in the process of national development. India is going to experience a rapid pace of urbanization. It will become urban majority society sooner than expected. A large number of census towns and polarization of population in class I towns provide an opportunity to gear up administration of urban development towards suitable actions to achieve a balanced urban growth so that economic potential of class I (100000 and more people). To develop small and medium towns as more effective service centers to their hinterland, metro cities is fully utilized and spatial dispersal of economic activities is also promoted. The information show that Indian urbanization in the first decade of twenty first century is emerging as a positive force to trigger economic growth. It all set to undergo a rapid pace of urbanization during next twenty years. To ensure balanced and inclusive urban growth across the states and across the size-class of towns covering both larger cities, this needs suitable policies for global and inter-state and inter-regional context and small and medium towns in the context their hinterland.

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