



Urban Infrastructure: Problems & Solutions

Dr. Hina M.Patel^{1*}, Ms.Bharati Prajapati²

¹* Principal, Maniben M.P Shah Mahila Arts College, Kadi, Gujarat

² Visiting Lecturer, Maniben M.P Shah Mahila Arts College, Kadi, Gujarat

***Corresponding author:** Dr. Hina M.Patel

¹Principal, Maniben M.P Shah Mahila Arts College, Kadi, Gujarat

Abstract:

In the era of globalization, where the world envisions progress through urbanization, the focus often shifts to economic prosperity and the expectations of countries like India to elevate their standing on the global stage. However, amid these aspirations, this research paper sheds light on the overlooked struggles faced by the underprivileged common man in India due to the challenges arising from globalization and urbanization. This article critically examines the disconnect between the grand ideals of globalization and urbanization and the harsh realities faced by the underprivileged, presenting a significant departure from Gandhiji's vision of 'Antyodaya,' inspired by John Ruskin's 'Unto the Last.' Drawing on various statistical data, including census figures, the paper seeks to unveil the socio-economic disparities that persist despite the overarching narrative of progress.

Keywords: Urban, Infrastructure, Problems, Solutions, Urbanization,

Introduction:

In the grand tapestry of globalization, with its promise of progress through urbanization, India stands as a focal point for expectations of economic ascendancy. However, amidst the glittering narratives of growth and development, a stark reality emerges - the common man in India, often underprivileged and marginalized, seems to have been forgotten in the pursuit of global urbanization ideals. This stark contrast is not only a deviation from the aspirations of the developed world but also a poignant setback to Gandhiji's vision of 'Antyodaya,' a concept rooted in John Ruskin's timeless work '**Unto the Last.**' This research endeavours to unravel the intricacies of the challenges faced by the underprivileged in the context of globalization and urbanization. While statistical data, including census figures, forms the backbone of our exploration, the underlying narrative is one of disparity. The very foundation of our investigation is the United Nations Population Fund's assertion that our world has unequivocally become an urban world. With approximately 3.3 billion individuals currently residing in urban areas, a figure expected to burgeon to 5 billion by 2030, the impact of this urban shift on the underprivileged becomes a pressing concern.

Population and Urbanization:

Today when everything is considered in the perspective of globalization it is believed that the people all over the world will be able to progress with the help of urbanization. On the one hand the developed and affluent countries of the world are expecting India – a country which is made of several small villages to become economically sound in the ensuing time. They also expect that the “BRIC” countries and their economy will become effective.

The present article has its focus on a different sort problems which has arisen out of the issue referred to in the beginning of this article. In fact in the concern of Globalization and urbanization the common man of India who is underprivileged seems to have been forgotten completely. So it is a severe setback to Gandhiji's ideal of 'Antyodaya'-the idea he had borrowed from John Ruskin's 'Unto the Last' Various statistical data including those of census have been taken as a base in preparing this article.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), “the world now lives in cities”. The world population has decisively turned urban. At present about 3.3 billion people live in urban areas and by 2030 that would increase to about 5 billion. UNFPA reports show that half of the global population will live in cities for the first time in human history. The report predicts that the number of people living in urban areas will rise to 70 per cent by 2050. Currently, 3.3 billion people of an estimated population of 6.4 billion are living in urban areas and their number will double to 6.4 billion by 2050. When some 9.2 billion people are expected to inhabit the earth the report said.

The Ratio of Urbanization is less in comparison with the other countries of the world. 71 per cent population of our country lives in villages even till date. Nevertheless, there has been a rise in Urbanization in recent years.

Table 1 Population of India by residence

Census year	Number of urban agglomeration/town	Total population	Urban population	rural population
1901	1827	238396327	25851873	212544454
1911	1825	252093390	25941633	226151757
1921	1949	251321213	28086167	223235046
1931	2072	278977238	33455989	245521249
1941	2250	318660580	44153297	274507283
1951	2843	361088090	62443709	288644381
1961	2363	439234771	78936603	360298168
1971	2590	598159652	109113977	489045675
1981	3378	683329097	159462547	523866550
1991	3768	844324222	217177625	627146597
2001	5161	1027015247	285354954	741660293

Sources: Various Census reports

“The Urbanization of India is taking place at a faster rate than in the rest of world. By 2030, 40.76 per cent of India’s population will be living in urban areas compared to about 28.4 per cent now. There has been constant increase in the number of migrants in big cities after 1970. At the same time these mega cities have not developed as much as they ideally should have been. We have Kolkata and Mumbai as instances in this regard. Urbanization which has resulted due to Liberalization is the move to modernization, but strangely enough the economic as well as living conditions of the slum dwellers in these urban areas is worse than those who live in rural areas. According to the report, over 90 per cent of slum-dwellers live in developing countries with China and India accounting for 37 per cent of them.

Table 2 degree/index of Urbanization 1901 to 2001

Census Years	Percent Urban	Percent Rural	Urban-Rural Ratio(Percent)
1901	10.84	89.15	12.16
1911	10.29	89.71	11.47
1921	11.18	88.82	12.58
1931	11.99	88.01	13.68
1941	13.86	86.14	16.08
1951	17.29	82.71	20.91
1961	17.97	82.03	12.91
1971	18.24	81.76	22.31
1981	23.33	76.66	30.44
1991	25.72	74.28	34.63
2001	27.78	72.22	38.47

Sources: Various Census reports

While agreeing with the European economists, the Indian economists say that Urbanization which is a mark of liberalization helps provide the opportunity of employment to the poor but the grim reality seems to have escaped their notice that 56 person out of 100 have to dwell in slums.

A common man would define the differences between the urban and the rural in quite a different way from that of the student of social science. The common man would identify such areas as urban which have the facilities of water, sewage and roads and as rural areas which are lacking in them. In this being posed as a guide in this regard we will have to understand and keep in mind the bitter reality against the ideal. Let us understand the components of urban growth along with Urbanization with the help of the following table.

% share	1971-81	1981 -91
Natural increase	41.7(45.1)	59.9(58.7)
Net migration + changes in municipal boundaries	39.4(36.1)	22.6(23.7)
Area classification	18.8(18.8)	17.4(17.5)

It can be seen that the ratio of net migration during 1971-81 was 39.4% which came down to 22.6% during the next decade. The rural-urban migration has fallen from 6.5% in 1981 to 2.8% in 2001. These figures prove the claim that rural people migrate to urban areas for employment due to privatization and liberalization to be untrue. Not only that some data pointed out that the rural–urban migration has fallen from 6.5 % in 1981 to 2.8 % in 2001.let us have look at some other details concerning the urban as well as the rural areas.

1. A study of consumption in last 26 years reveals that an increase in Urban Household consumption of Rs.100 leads to an increase of Rs.39 in the rural household income.
2. During the last decade, the rural economy is estimated to have grown by 7.3% as compared to 5.4% of urban economy.
3. The rural economy is nearly as big as the urban. In 2000, the rural economy accounted for 49% of the India's GDP.

Problems of Urbanization:

1. Basic problems :

The basic problems of Urbanization in India are very large. They are like housing, slums, transportation, water supply, sanitation, pollution, lack of social infrastructure. E.g. schools, and hospitals.

2. Metropolitan cities loss their generate employment capacity:

Our Metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi and Kolkata have reached saturation level of employment generating capacity. These cities are suffering from of urban poverty, housing shortage and unemployment.

3. Transfer of poverty :

Production is done with the help of modern technology and machines in most of the cities now days which renders illiterate and unskilled rural poor unemployed. As result of which he is known as the urban poor.

4. Social and economic inequalities:

The migrant rural youth as well as the local youth of the urban areas don't find employment which gives birth to the "have and have not" in the words of Karl Marx in the urban societies. And this chasm leads to social conflict, crime and anti social activities.

5. Detriment to environment and the degradation of the standard of life:

Over population causes many problems such as the growth of slums, increase in various kinds of pollutions such as sound pollution, moreover, because of insufficient number of schools the unskilled and illiterate poor people cannot educate their children properly which in turn becomes instrumental in creating the same kind of generation without the least improvement. In the same way because of insufficient facilities of hospitals these wretched people cannot avail of proper medical treatment. And their children suffer from diseases and malnutrition.

Remedies:

- 1) On the one hand when India is making progress with strong GDP rate and major part of its population is quite young as per the demographic profile, but on other when we have a look at the figures provided by the human development the golden picture seems to be quite far from reality. A nation making fast economic progress is not being able to make progress in the Human Development Index. On the contrary in the year 2007-08 it has further slipped down to the 128th from 127 out of the 177 countries of the world. Progress of the common man seems to have been forgotten in the race of economic development. In the same way the Rural Development seems to have been pushed into the background in the concern of the Urban Development. Such a state of the prevailing situation leads to the conviction that Social Development also should be given equal importance along with Infrastructure Development. Contrary to the accepted notion that the rural population migrates towards the cities for employment, the statistics shows that merely employment is not the key factor behind migration. Taking this into consideration the basic amenities like water, road, electricity and sewage system should be provided at the rural level. So that employment opportunities can be created at the local level in the rural areas also and the problem of migration can be mitigated and not only that but poor people can also get rid of the problems of pollution, housing, slums and transportation.
- 2) The concept of Rurbanization i.e. the linking of rural and urban areas should be put into practice. The extremely useful service like the construction of 1,46,000 KMs of new rural roads, connecting 66,800 habitations with all weather roads which are known as 'Bharat Nirman Program' under the Rural Infrastructure Development Project must be implemented and completed as early as possible.
- 3) The development programmes in our country are implemented in different manners. For instance there are two programmes named Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission for Urban Infrastructure Development and Bharat Nirman and NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Assurance) for the Rural Infrastructure Development. But there seems to be a complete lack of planning between both the sectors. Farming and Industries can be encouraged by developing 'TOWNS' according to the 'TAIWAN MODEL' instead of Metro cities or Mega cities. ("Good towns with good infrastructure and not Mega-Metro cities, as most of us tend to believe").
- 4) Indian planners have to try to faster economic dynamism in Rural Areas where 70% of the population lives and Rural Development implies improving agriculture and establishment of agro industries.
- 5) If systems are separated into their component parts they cannot perform the functions of which they are capable when put together in the right combination; As Example, A pile of bicycle parts cannot be ridden until assembled in the correct way. So, if we think in terms of over whole development not just as rural development nor an urban development but countries development, we get fruitful results.

- 6) First of all we have to mean on the basic problem and then we have to try to solve that problems is a Primary Solution for India's Development.

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