

URBAN GROWTH AND PROBLEMS OF URBANIZATION

- Urbanization is a dynamic process, which transforms the rural into urban areas and gives the impetus of growth to the other existing urban areas. Urbanization brings with it a whole gamut of social progress. It is a long term and continuous process. Urbanization is a complex phenomenon and nearly all the societies, nations, states and regions go through it. It is the process of becoming urban or to be making them urban. In real sense, the increase in the ratio of urban population is called urbanization.

Urban Growth:

- Growth of urban population is depended upon the process of urbanization. Urbanization is a behavioural, structural and demographic process by which villages turn into towns and towns develop into cities. It is both an indicator and manifestation of economic development and social change. According to Hauser and Duncan, characterize urbanization as a change in the pattern of population distribution. It involves an increase in the size of urban population and growth in number and size of urban places with increasing concentration of population of such places. Smails considers urban places as a specific man-made landscape, which must have some specific characteristics like permanent fixed cluster, comparatively high level of living, with some division of labour i.e. specialization of task which include variety of secondary and tertiary services like serving, trading, manufacturing etc, rather than merely be engaged in primary sector like in agriculture, fishing, hunting, gathering etc.

- The urban growth in the recent decades was characterized by dualism. It attracted population of urban areas due to industrialization and infrastructural investments. However, the backward states-particularly their backward districts and small and medium towns also experienced rapid urban growth because a part of rural-urban migration in backward states could also be attributed to push factors, due to lack of diversification in agrarian economy.
- During the last one hundred ten years, the growth of urban population has four distinct phases. The growth rate in urban population has been very poor in first thirty years of 1901 to 1931. After 1931, it seems to grow with a great speed, up to 1961, but after that the growth rate recorded very slowly in 1951-61, because of the change in definition of urban areas. In the decade of 1961-71, the growth rate increased. This decade noted the growth rate of 37.8 percent.

Phases of Urban Growth: It is divided into four periods.

- I. Period of slow urbanization: 1901-1931** – During the period of 1901 to 1931, the urban population noted the slow growth due to spread of epidemics, famines and high mortality. Though in 1918, a part of rural population was migrated to the towns, but it didn't left much influence on the growth of towns. After 1921, the nation remained free from the fear of natural calamities. But it couldn't leave much influence on the urban growth. The urban population noted an addition of 8.1 million in these decades and the percentage remained between 10.01 and 12.13.
- II. Period of moderate urbanization: 1931-61-** During these three decades, urban population has shown an addition of 45 million. The proportion in 1931 was 12.13, which reached to 18.00 in 1961. Thus, this percentage recorded one and half times increase, whereas during the period, urban population increased by two and half times. This was beginning of the era of planned development in the country. It led the economic development with a slow speed in the early stage.

III. Period of Rapid urbanization: 1961-1991 – After 1961 the urban population has shown very high exceptional increase. During these three decades, there is an addition of 183.4 million urban populations, against the total increase of 405.1 million in the years of 1901-1961. The growth rate is the highest in 1971-81 decade, i.e. 46.14 %. During this period, 1279, new towns were emerged out on the map of India.

IV. Period of High Rapid Urbanization: 1991-2011 – During these decades, 159.9 million urban populations was added. This addition is just equivalent to the urban population was increased from 25.72 to 31.16 percent. This period noted an addition of 4326 new towns. It is clear that a number of villages are proceeding towards urbanization. It is also observed that metropolitan cities are making impressive increase in their population size. These were 23 in number in 1991, but this number touched the figure of 53 in 2011. This high growth is caused due to following factors:-

1. Establishment of industrial and commercial establishments in the country in a large number.
2. The attraction of people especially of rural people towards the towns and cities.
3. To obtain the status of urban settlements by a number of rural settlements.
4. The emergence and development of a number of new urban centers.
5. The high increase in the population size of existing towns, especially by the large metropolitan cities.

PROBLEMS OF URBANIZATION

- Urbanization is one of the indicators of economic as well as regional development. The main problems and issues of urbanization in India is due to unplanned urban growth. Unplanned urban growth directly related to uncontrolled rural to urban migration. It is a vicious circle of rural poverty leading to migration in cities in search of job, non-availability of respectable full time employment hence poverty leading to these migrants building temporary shelter for themselves and latter many of them following and using the vacant public space for building shanties and settling down. This further perpetuates poverty and side by side unhealthy urban environment. The civic authorities ignore them, normally at the behest of local politicians, and later there is no stopping the growth of other slum related problems in the cities like crime, environmental degradation and excessive pressure on civic amenities.

- The major related problems of urbanization within India are as follows:-
 - (i) Overpopulation
 - (ii) Urban sprawl
 - (iii) Congested accommodation in Urban areas
 - (iv) Squatter Settlements
 - (v) Sanitation
 - (vi) Unemployment
 - (vii) Problems related to transportation
 - (viii) Poverty
 - (ix) Environmental Degradation
 - (x) Solid waste disposal
 - (xi) Problems related to water
 - (xii) Urban crimes

(i) **Overpopulation:**

Overpopulation is a situation in which many people live in little space. Overpopulation is a logical consequence of overcrowding in urban areas. It is naturally expected that cities having a large size of population gathered in a small space and they were suffered from overpopulation. This is well showed by almost all the big cities of India.

(ii) **Urban Sprawl:**

Urban sprawl is the root cause of urban problems in growing cities. In most of the cities the economic base is incapable of dealing with the problems created by their excessive size. Massive immigration from rural to urban areas as well as from small towns into big cities has taken place almost consistently; thereby adding to the size of cities.

(iii) **Congested accommodation in Urban areas:**

Housing provision for the growing urban population will be the biggest challenge before the government. The growing cost of houses comparison to the income of the urban middle class has made it impossible for majority of lower income groups and is residing in congested accommodation and many of those are devoid of proper ventilation, lighting, water supply, sewage system, etc. For instance in Delhi, the current estimate is of a shortage of 5, 00,000 dwelling units the coming decades. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) introduced the concept of “Housing Poverty” which includes “Individuals and households who lack safe, secure and healthy shelter, with basic infrastructure such as piped water and adequate provision for sanitation, drainage and the removal of household waste”.

(iv) **Squatter Settlements:**

No clear-cut distinction can be drawn between slums and squatter settlements in practice except that slums are relatively more stable and are located in older, inner parts of cities compared to squatter settlements which are relatively temporary and are often scattered in all parts of the city, especially outer zones where urban areas merge with their rural hinterland. Normally, squatter settlements contain makeshift dwellings constructed without official permission.

(v) **Sanitation:**

The poor sanitation situation is another gloomy feature in urban areas and particularly in slums and unauthorized colonies of urban areas. The drainage system in many unorganized colonies and slums do either not exist and if existing are in a bad shape and in bits resulting in blockage of waste water. These unsanitary conditions lead too many sanitation related diseases such as diahorrea and malaria. Unsafe garbage disposal is one of the critical problems in urban areas and garbage management always remained a major challenge.

(vi) **Unemployment:**

The problem of unemployment is also serious issue of problems of urbanization. Urban unemployment in India is estimated at 15 to 25% of the population. This percentage is even higher among the educated people.

(vii) **Problems related to transportation:**

As high income individual are buying more private vehicle and use less public transport. Such enormous number of vehicles in cities is causing more traffic jam, which in turn decreases the efficiency of public transport. Also the infiltration of public transport is less, which makes people use private vehicle. Public transport is less disabled friendly. There is also lack of infrastructure and poor maintenance of existing public transport infrastructure.

(viii) **Poverty:**

Nowadays roughly one third of the urban population lives below poverty line. There are clear disparities between haves and have-nots in urban areas. The most demanding of the urban challenges unquestionably is the challenge posed by poverty; the challenge of reducing exploitation, relieving misery and creating more human condition for urban poor. There is rise in urban inequality, as per UN habitat report, 2010, urban inequality in India rose from 34 to 38 % based on consumption in period of 1995 to 2005.

(ix) **Environmental Degradation:**

Environmental degradation is to risk posed by the increasing man-made and natural disasters. According to UNDP 70 percentage of Indian population is at risk to floods and percentage susceptible to earthquakes. The risk is higher in urban areas owing to density and overcrowding. Urban areas are becoming heat islands, ground water is not being recharged and water crisis is persistent. Here making, water harvesting compulsory will be beneficial.

(x) **Solid waste disposal:**

As we know that Indian cities grow in number and size the problem of trash disposal is assuming alarming proportions. Huge quantities of garbage produced by our cities pose a serious health problem. Most cities do not have proper arrangements for garbage disposal and the existing landfills are full to the brim. These landfills are hotbeds of disease and innumerable poisons leaking into their surroundings.

(xi) **Problems related to water:**

Water is one of the most necessary elements of nature to sustain life and right from the beginning of urban civilization, sites for settlements have always been chosen keeping in view the

availability of water to the inhabitants of the settlement. However, water crisis started falling short of demand as the cities grew in size and number.

(xii) **Urban crimes:**

Urban Crimes: Modern cities present a meeting point of people from different walks of life having no affinity with one another. Like other problems, the problem of crimes increases with the increase in urbanization. In fact the increasing trend in urban crimes tends to disturb peace and tranquility of the cities and make them unsafe to live in particularly for the women.

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