



Urban Expansion and Development

This editorial is based on [urban governance model of Maharashtra](#) which was published in The Indian Express on 05/05/2023. It talks about urbanization and associated issues.

For Prelims: [Smart Cities](#), [AMRUT Mission](#), [Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban](#), [HRIDAY](#), [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban](#), [Aspirational district programm](#).

For Mains: Issues with rapid urbanization in India, Measures to tackle challenges of rapid urbanization

Urbanization is one of the most common characteristics of economic development. As the economy grows gradually, the process of urbanization depends on the shift of the surplus population from rural to urban areas along with the growth of some industrial urban centres.

Urbanization is closely linked to modernization and industrialization. Urbanization is not just a modern phenomenon, but a rapid and historic transformation of human social roots on a global scale, whereby, rural culture is rapidly replaced by predominantly urban culture.

For reasons of wealth and social mobility, many rural people come to the city. But the picture of urbanization is not as glorious as it seems. Modern cities have grown in a haphazard and unplanned way due to rapid industrialization.

According to the [2011 Census](#), the urbanization rate in India was 31.2%, up from 27.8% in 2001. Around 590 million people would live in the cities by 2030. India is experiencing rapid urbanization. Therefore, it is important to understand the pattern of this growth and its effect on the population.

What are the Causes of Rapid Urbanization?

The growing trend of urbanization is reflected in the increasing concentration of the majority of the urban population in some major cities.

- **Natural Population Increase:**

- Rapid urbanization is taking place due to the high rate of natural population growth.
- The natural growth rate of the urban population is higher than that of the rural population due to the higher net survival rate resulting from improved health and medical facilities.
- Death rates in urban areas have decreased considerably due to improved availability of medical and health services, safe drinking water supply and improved sanitation facilities.

- **Migrations:**

- Rural-urban migration is considered to be another important factor responsible for rapid urbanization in India.
- The creation of many manufacturing and trading activities as a result of industrial

development has led to the migration of rural people to urban areas in search of jobs and higher incomes.

- As a result of heavy public investment in industry and mining, large-scale industrial development and sustainable agricultural development are taking place.
 - Due to pull factors, a large number of rural people are migrating to urban areas.
- There are certain push factors in which a number of rural people are driven out of villages due to economic constraints, lack of facilities, political violence.

▪ **Expansion of Trade and Industry:**

- Urbanization has taken place with a growing expansion of industry and trade in a particular state of the region.
- Growth of an industry with its ancillaries, together with the localization of industry, would always create a favourable situation for the growth of an urban establishment.
 - Similarly, the growth of business and trade, together with the establishment of an active market, always provides adequate support for growing urbanization in those places linked to the development of industry and trade.

What are the Consequences of Rapid Urbanization?

▪ **Positive Aspect:**

◦ **Economic Growth:**

- Rapid industrialization results in the development and establishment of many industrial cities.
- Together with manufacturing units, ancillaries and the service sector have begun to grow in these urban areas.

◦ **Employment:**

- New and additional employment opportunities are being created in urban areas in the newly expanding manufacturing and service sector.
- This would result in rural-urban migration and the industrialization urbanization process to be established.

◦ **Modernization and Change in Attitude:**

- Urbanization results in changes in the attitudes and minds of urban people resulting in the modernization of behaviour and a proper motivation that indirectly helps the country to achieve faster economic development.

▪ **Negative Aspect**

◦ **Congestion:**

- Growing urbanization is largely responsible for increasing congestion in urban areas.
- Too much congestion has resulted in problems such as traffic jams, too much concentration of the population, the management of which is gradually becoming very difficult and costly.

◦ **Low Quality of Life:**

- Too much of the population creates urban chaos related to housing, education, medical facilities, slum growth, unemployment, violence, overcrowding, etc.
- All of these would lead to deterioration in the quality of human life.

◦ **Loss of Productivity in Rural Areas:**

- Large-scale migration from rural to urban areas takes place.
- Such large-scale migration of the active population from rural areas would result in a loss of productivity in rural areas, leading to poor conditions in the village economy.
- As a result, urbanization beyond a certain point would have unhealthy consequences.

What is the Significance of Urban Living?

▪ **Easier Access to Facilities:**

- Urban living is linked with higher levels of literacy and education, better health, longer life expectancy, greater access to social services and enhanced opportunities for cultural and political participation.
- Urbanization is associated with easier access to hospitals, clinics and health services in

general.

- Living in proximity to these services results in improved emergency care and general health.

▪ **Access to Information:**

- There are also benefits from easier access to sources of information such as radio and television which may be used to communicate information about health to the general public.
 - For instance, women living in towns and cities are more likely to be informed about family planning which results in reduction in family size and less frequent childbirth.

▪ **Individualism:**

- The multiplicity of opportunities, social diversity, and lack of familial and social control over decision making leads to more self-interest and facilitates decision-making by an individual and choosing one's career and actions by oneself.

What are the Issues Associated with Urbanization?

▪ **Excessive Population Pressure:**

- On the one hand, rural-urban migration accelerates the pace of urbanisation, on the other, it creates excessive population pressure on the existing public utilities.
- Consequently, the cities suffer from the problems of slums, crime, unemployment, urban poverty, pollution, congestion, ill-health and several deviant social activities.

▪ **Overflowing Slums:**

- There are about 13.7 million slum households in the country sheltering a population of 65.49 million people across the country.
- As much as 65% of Indian cities have adjoining slums where people live in small houses adjacent to each other.

▪ **Inadequate Housing:**

- Among the numerous social problems of urbanization, the problem of housing is the most distressing.
- A vast majority of the urban population live under conditions of poor shelter and in highly congested spaces.
- In India, more than half of the urban households occupy a single room, with an average occupancy per room of 4.4 persons.

▪ **Unplanned Development:**

- The model of building a developed city comprises unplanned development, which only bolsters the dichotomy prevailing in urban cities between the rich and the poor.

▪ **Pandemic-Induced Problems:**

- The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the misery of urban poor or slum dwellers.
- The sudden implementation of complete Covid lockdown severely affected the ability of slum dwellers to earn their living.

▪ **Non-Inclusive Welfare Schemes:**

- The benefits of welfare schemes for urban poor often reach only a small part of the intended beneficiaries.
- Most relief funds and benefits do not reach slum dwellers, mainly because of inclusion and exclusion errors.

What are the India's Initiatives for Urbanization?

Schemes/Programmes Related to Urban Development:

- [Smart Cities](#)
- [AMRUT Mission](#)
- [Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban](#)
- [HRIDAY](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban](#)
- [Aspirational district programm.](#)

What Should be the Way Forward?

- **Integration of Inclusive Urban Development:**
 - Adopting an integrated approach to urban programming by involving all development sectors, and prioritizing inclusivity in urban development.
- **Use of Scientific Data Methods:**
 - Use of scientific data methods for assessing and monitoring outcomes of both state and central schemes to ensure evidence-based decision-making.
- **Citizen Participation:**
 - Enhancing the voice and participation of citizens in civic affairs through physical and digital means to ensure that their needs and priorities are reflected in urban governance.
- **Strategic Thinking and Investment:**
 - Investing in strategic thinking and investment, including private sector participation, and integrated and coordinated actions across agencies to address the challenges faced by cities.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the causes of rapid urbanisation in India and also suggest measures to overcome issues arising out of rapid urbanisation.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q. With reference to the Indian economy after the 1991 economic liberalization, consider the following statements: (2020)

1. Worker productivity (Rs. per worker at 2004-05 prices) increased in urban areas while it decreased in rural areas.
2. The percentage share of rural areas in the workforce steadily increased.
3. In rural areas, the growth in non-farm economy increased.
4. The growth rate in rural employment decreased.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 and 4 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 4 only

Ans: (b)

Exp;

- A 2017 NITI Aayog Report, "Changing Structure of Rural Economy of India Implications for Employment and Growth", provides the following information
- regarding the rural economy:
- Worker productivity has increased for both rural and urban areas. For rural areas it was `37273 in 2004-05 and `101755 in 2011-12, while for urban areas it was `120419 in 2004-05 and `282515 in 2011-12. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- The rural share in the total workforce declined steadily from 76.1% in 1999-00 to 70.9% in 2011-12. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.
- One of the significant changes in the rural production structure is the growing share of the non-farm sector, which increased from 37% in 1980-81 to 65% in 2009-10, and thus shows that in terms of value of production, rural is no longer merely agricultural.

◦ **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

- Rural employment showed 2.16% annual growth rate during the pre-reform period, which decelerated in the post-reform period to 1.45% and turned negative (-0.28%) in the period of economic acceleration. Hence, statement 4 is correct.
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer**

Mains

Q. The frequency of urban floods due to high intensity rainfall is increasing over the years. Discussing the reasons for urban floods, highlight the mechanisms for preparedness to reduce the risk during such events. **(2016)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/urban-expansion-and-development>

