

# URBANIZATION IN INDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON RURAL AREAS

## A Study on Changing Pattern of Social Topography

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### Introduction

The social changes taking place in the rural areas all over are frequently topics of discussion and objects of comments by observant citizens as well as social scientists. Local observations are often reported in the press. Protagonists in ecological studies contend that India has been passing through the gestation pain of an urban growth on the demographic frontier somewhat unprecedented any other time. This school of thought maintains that the progress of urbanization is synonymous with the general development in favour of economic prosperity of the nation. Several authors, however, pointed out that in the 40s and particularly, following the first few years India became independent politically, there was a period of rapid pace of urbanization. Although the rate of urbanization has been relatively slower and halting at times, it is held that this is an intermittent period of leveling off of the degree of urbanization and the rate of urban growth would be intensified in the near future.

### The Hypotheses of Ecological Processes

In this article a sociological treatise has been developed indicating the trend of urban interaction with the population in the hinterland having an impact of urbanization. In the discussion that follows it is postulated that both the urban and rural economies are an integral part of the larger economy of the nation and that urbanization and industrialization involves shift of employment and investment from the essential 'primary' to 'secondary' to 'tertiary' activities. The following assumptions have been considered in analyzing the given pace of urbanization :

1. Industrialization of society occurs primarily in the urban type of locational matrix and in which development of economic nature occurs near such location.
- 2(a). The rate of industrial growth is concentrated in urban centres while agriculture is dispersed over the rural areas. As industrialization progresses the urban-industrial sector steadily increases its share of national labour force largely drawn from the hinterland.
- (b) This shift in the allocation of the labour force is possible because of a continuously increasing agricultural productivity, which permits an ever larger proportion of the total population to be engaged in non-agricultural activities.
3. In a developing society it is the urban way of life that is dynamic and expanding and consequently, processes of urbanization have a great bearing on the rural sector.
4. In a developing society with an emphasis upon production and consumption of goods and services, the city grows through the extension of transportation and communication facilities, which tap an ever larger area for raw materials and for potential clientele.
5. One significant effect of the extension of transportation and communication facilities into rural areas is to orient cultivators toward the urban market, and speed up the impact of industrialization on farming technology.

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6. In contrast to the cities or metropolitan areas, adoption of technology on farm leads to a declining need for workers and the production of the national labour force employed in the agricultural sector is diverted towards industrial enterprises operating in the urban area.
7. Rural people tend to migrate toward the employment opportunities in the city or metropolitan communities, thus an out-migration has an important implication relating to social organization for the rural as well as urban sectors.

Some of the questions raised for further discussion in this short article are: What are the social forces which have contributed to the out-migration of the rural population to urban communities having centralized metropolitan characteristics such as, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Delhi? Likewise, how the upcoming industrial cities among others—Durgapur, Rourkela, Bhilai, Nangal, Sindri, Burnpur, Chittaranjan, Jamshedpur, Ahmedabad and Kanpur (these latter three cities gained a hallmark of an industrialized city few decades back) and cluster of developing urban areas are subserving the people as supply base, place of marketing, and trading centres which in turn, feedback to the larger city and metropolitan areas? How do the out-migrating and commuting groups from the rural areas adjacent to urban communities, identify with the host community social organization? What are the dominant problems of these people who have economic incentives for earning in the urban communities, but have social obligations and responsibilities back in the family and home community? To what extent is rural leadership pattern being affected by becoming more and more dependent on the city complex?

In the following section the process of urbanization has been discussed having classified the nature and extent of growth in the context of (1) metropolitan areas, (2) industrial cities or townships, and (3) district urban communities.

**1. Metropolitan Areas.**—During colonial time metropolitan designed by the East India Company was located in favourable geographical spots on riverside and sheltered bays particularly in reference to—Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.

All these metropolitan areas developed a period of 150/200 years to subserve the needs of the administration along with large commercial enterprise following a pattern of western values of capitalistic economy, multiple types of institutional arrangements, these large cities provided a unique scope, various types of formal and professional education, public administration, entertainment and recreation and numerous civic and social facilities attracting hundreds and thousands of people having divergent interests in urban way of life.

The metropolises was not only political cross-cultural centres but also performed the stock exchange which have had a bearing on national and international economic money markets—very often the transaction with foreign countries, the wholesale and trading houses, industrial and manufacturing plants were also concentrated in these cities.

Some migrants were attracted by the glamour of the metropolises and some by the conditions of economic improvements. But in rural folks who came to the metropolitan in mass scale had been pushed out from the control. In such cases as were the instance during 1943 famine in Bengal, India, crisis during the World War II, and influenza upheavals preceding and following partition of India in 1947, social forces pushed people into the cities.

A number of state capitals all over the country also, took on multiple functions and other forms following the well set pattern of metropolises and had drawn a large number of administrators in government service, and tertiary business and other services constituting an ever expanding urban complex.

**2. Industrial Cities and Townships.**—In the industrial cities and townships, they are relatively new and most of these industrial cities or townships like Durgapur or Nangal arose in places where raw materials like coal, iron ore, and power generating resources were found in abundance so that these scarce economic resources could be processed economically with the assistance of labour force made available

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During British period, growth of industrial cities and townships were subordinated as colonisers had their vested interest. Since India became politically free, a special emphasis has been given by our national government to help raise basic industries like steel mills, to install plants of heavy machinery such as, locomotives, plants to extract natural gas and oil resources, plants to fertilise in the area where raw materials and manpower already existed and made available for profitable usages. The newness of these cities—the absence of other interest groups, patronage of our national government, was doubtlessly an important factor in their rapid rise. Many of these industrial cities and townships arose in places where earlier there had been wasteland, or no places of settlement, or some small village.

Leather industries in Kanpur, steel processing plants in Jamshedpur, cotton textile in Ahmedabad grew and developed mostly under private enterprise during British time and might be regarded as the pioneering industrial complex following the technique of mass scale production.

One typical characteristic of these industrial cities is that their growth was by and large, associated with the availability of necessary raw materials coupled with the demand for labour and that people moved into the city because employment opportunities were created there. This process was also adopted by the national government which made necessary capital investment for the rapid growth of these industrial areas in a planned way in line with our national interest.

An onward expansion of these industrial complex called forth a secularly increasing demand for labour force. As any given industrial city was growing in population and as subsidiary production increased around each city, external economies for the main industries to establish a new textile mill in Ahmedabad he must count not only on the presence of a skilled labour force, but he must have supplies of raw materials, wholesalers to whom he can easily sell his output, sources of credit, repair shops for his machinery, and many other subsidiary services near at hand. This in turn encourages the further expansion of industrial base of the city calling forth more raw materials

in the form of agricultural produce and fibre materials, petro-chemical resources, etc., among other items.

**3. District Urban Areas.**—Few years back students of rural society were not so conscious of this rural-urban interaction; they were more concerned with the indirect drift of the rural people. Direct and indirect contacts have multiplied in recent years. Direct contact of farm, communication between rural artisan groups, village and small town families and urban centres occur through educational and governmental activities. Rural-urban interaction also takes place through full or part-time employment, purchasing, marketing, entertainment and visiting. Conversely, city dwellers, official functionaries are in closer touch than before with rural affairs through organized programme, cultural activities, ownership of property, travel and visiting. The variety and extent of governmental activities, nature of private business and educational contacts are expanding far and beyond the district town areas these days.

As the district town grows in population—say nearing 1,00,000 wholesale and retail business jumps considerably at a relatively faster pace to meet the growing demands of the people. Small scale manufacturing enterprises are also attracted in suburbia for consideration of land and labour in these growing urban areas. Spare parts and machine tool industries, hosiery and bicycle factories tend to be smaller, more diversified and relatively more dependent for both raw materials and labour upon the surrounding locality and particularly upon human resources as labour force. This additional demand for land, labour, and capital induces the onward and further expansion of urban base attracting financial institutions, manpower and specialized services. This in turn, gravitates a large number of workers among other items, who were previously engaged in village non-farm artisan service, and wage labour activities.

Life in this industrialized-cum-urbanized setting is ordered by factory whistle and the decision is made possibly by an unknown executive. Production dominates the behaviour of factory workers where contractual relationship replaces primary and informal shared group behaviour.

Improved means for transportation facilities collect farm produce and raw materials destined for neighbouring urban people's consumption and transport them to other manufacturing centres or to city wholesalers or retailers. Conversely, transportation agencies bring to the villages for distribution commodities needed for consumption or required in farming, trade and village industries. Thus interdependence and not local self-dependence is the dominant trend these days. The rural folks being more and more exposed to the urban and industrial way of life, are becoming conscious of regular jobs, fair wage rates, conditions of work, work hours, employer-employee relations and living conditions among other items.

Thousands of people commute these days to the city or metropolitan areas daily for employment, business and work, but keep their country residence. Media of communication such as, radio, movie pictures, newspaper and advertisement are dominating both rural and urban society. The great flow and ebb of thousands and thousands of country people into urban areas and back again is making profound change in rural-urban relationships.

Many means of institutional control and policy are also inherent in induced plans for binding local institutions such as—the village panchayat, cooperative credit and agricultural service societies, village development activities, schools, linking centralized organizations and leadership patterns at the district, state and central levels. The extent of mobility and the frequency of contacts are becoming more and more evident as our national government is making conscious efforts to integrate the overall society through public welfare programmes encompassing rural masses.

Coming to the process of urbanisation, it is in the fringe areas of cities and in the outlying districts of metropolitan areas that the design of rural urban relationship is changing most rapidly. Improved means of communication and transportation facilities together with the expansion of electrification and other public utilities have encouraged settlements of people in areas contiguous to the cities. This mobility is a two-way process. It is an escape from congested city centres and others the result of suburban development. On the

other hand, it is also movement of the people toward urban opportunities for employment, marketing, education and other services.

#### Psycho-social Problems and Problems Adjustments

It is in the light of cityward mobility the psycho-social problems of the income population in the recipient urban areas has been analysed. According to Census Commission, Census of India, 1951, in four of the eight largest cities the preponderance of males was found to be very strong. In Calcutta there were 602, in Bombay 669, in Ahmedabad 764, and in Kanpur 699 women per 1,000 males. The great predominance of males means stable families are rarer in cities than in the countryside. The men who come to the cities are usually single or leave their wives behind. In the former case they regard their stay as temporary, since they often come with the hope of making enough money and to go back and get married or to help their family. The are not city dwellers but temporary residents.

This situation, however, adds to the instability of the city population and it also adds to the stress and strain experienced by the coming groups. Possibly, it might contribute to one of the causes of the prostitution, gambling, racing, dope addiction and other forms of socially deviant behaviour. All these factors conspire to make the large cities highly unsuitable places for the development of forms of social cohesion and an inhospitable environment for potential labourers. Once could also be made about slum conditions and bad housing which have detrimental effects on the morale of industrial labour force. The inhospitality of the urban environment presses itself rather on the worker.

Employment could be uncertain and might not be fair and enough to permit savings for a rainy day. Families are torn apart by the comforting security of a known and a customised environment is lost. The number of face to face contacts with persons who one does not know increases. The loneliness of the individual becomes more pronounced in this impersonal social and work

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These factors, no doubt, impair discipline and level of performance to a given task. The major problem posed is how to adjust with the touch and go relationships, the anonymity and impersonality in the urban way of life.

About orientation to new technical skills, one may learn possibly with speed and the process may be adopted by many, but the program is inadequate scope or provision for training, the great shortage of vocational and other mentally oriented educational facilities and other impediments which might be the limiting factors in one's performance on the job.

This leads us to the knottiest problems in the urbanization and industrialization process in developing India, namely impact of the new forms of social structure and the requirements of new types of social behaviour appropriate to large scale production following factory system. The restructuring of social relations occurs as a result of mobilization of the labour force implying the imposition of contractual norms guiding employment behaviour in the industrial community. But the transition in the value system from ascription oriented particularistic norm to universalistic achievement oriented norm is accompanied by stress and strains which tend to produce social disorganization in various degrees. For example, as a part of the family function, an individual being raised in rural social values, reflects his own group-mind based on kinship or residence as he performs any individual acts. His responsibilities are considered not merely those he individually undertakes, but also those of the other members of the group to which he pertains. Similarly, any compensation he may get for his efforts is regarded by him not merely as a reward to be employed for his individual performance, but as something to be shared by the group of which he forms a part.

Thus labourers must share their money income with parents, fathers-in-law, or other relatives of respect to whom they show deference. In addition to this, the ranking of persons in terms of traditional status relations may differ considerably from that established in a factory work situation. For example, some elderly status might be subordinate in the factory system to younger men, and this subordination may express itself in a lower wage also, in actual

placement, of inferiority status in factory hierarchy. This new distribution and valuation of skills brings a disruptive effect on the traditional social system.

However, the author does not wish to suggest that these changes should be prevented in order to maintain an old and defunct traditional practice or even to preserve certain practices related to social structure from disruption. It is only to point out those changes which, in the light of production efficiency, may be necessary in the new work situation, in order to explain why the new social relation established in factory are often contradictory to the traditional and accepted values of a man to himself and his relation to his fellowmen. It may, also be indicated that, other things being equal the farther removed the factory, the locus in which traditional social system exists, the easier will it be accepted and fewer psycho-social impediments will stand in its way. Thus, a factory located in a village in which old culture still dominates, is more likely to create conflict than one located in a faraway city. The more homogeneous the labour force in a given factory, the more likely will be its resistance against changes in the accustomed patterns of authority and responsibility.

Finally, it is attempted here to do the count-down of the resultant social costs due to mobility of cultivators and other rural folks who came to the city, where they were more or less drawn to work as industrial labour. The transformation of a predominantly patron-client structured rural society geared to particularistic values of extended familism into a universalistic and secularised norm oriented urban society is likely to bring about social disorganization. On the socio-political level, it implies a new functional challenge for the rural society causing social disruption of folk-society which was primarily based on caste-oriented, patron-client type of interdependence. Now, the question arises whether the village as a social system can offer the role of vigorous community leadership at this juncture of social vacuum. At the urban front, the question is whether new secularized norms can emerge to govern behaviour in the factory setup and social interaction. The people who actually move into the city crowd, are in a sense, assuming the role of pioneer in the demographic frontier. There is no question that the gap

intra and inter-culture, form of economic activities and pattern of social relations which they have to bridge would become narrower for those who would follow.

### Conclusion

The demographic changes taking place in the satellite rural areas are directly related to changes in the dynamic relationship between the rural and urban communities. The changing allocation of manpower in such a transitional society might accelerate the pace of urban growth at the same time that technical advances might depolarize home from work. Evidence is emphatic that rural-urban society is becoming increasingly interrelated and the processes resulting from a society that is undergoing transition are far from complete and thus implications of this social change cannot be drawn conclusively. The nature and extent of social problems already evident vary in terms bringing about personality disorganization to unleash social forces causing a potential threat to certain segment of our society.

Urban-rural change is a continuous process; a search for the characteristic sequential patterns of this change is the task remaining. To bring more relevant facts into lime light, it will be a singular task of social scientists to conduct a series of concerted studies delving into the changing patterns in population characteristic such as, density, age, and sex composition, educational status, inter-generational occupational mobility, residential status, horizontal and vertical mobility, job adjustments, nature and extent of social contacts, usages of leisure, attitude towards rural community and kinship

groups, and change of personality orientation.

It would be a challenging task for a researcher to conduct studies in order to influence social changes particularly the directing social forces and the kind of social organization that would be needed to regulate and stabilize norms and values of group behaviour so that social chaos and conflicts can be possibly minimized. To help achieve these desirable results, the question arises as to how the self-governing bodies in cooperation with possible voluntary organizations can have specific programmes within the scope of community development activities. This possibly would help create social awareness, civic responsibilities among the income recipient groups. Concomitantly, as a consequence of mobility from the rural community and resultant impact on urban society, rural community development programme should be accentuated to help organize, encourage and sustain the growth of social organizations maintaining some of the basic and norms inherent in our rural society meet this challenge it is highly desirable programme planners should coordinate and rural developmental activities.

In line with the national goal of a social pattern of society, we have also to study extent to which the process of urbanization going hand in hand with the overall economic development of our rural communities. Judicious industrial development is essential for national prosperity, special emphasis must be given to the task of the development of rural economy to minimize the gap and parity of real income between the rural and urban sectors.

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