COURSE 1: INTRODUCTION TO URBAN GOVERNANCE — CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES

Block 1: Understanding the Urban Society

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1. Introduction

Urbanisation is the physical growth of urban areas. It can be defined as the rapid and massive growth of, and migration to, large cities resulting in both positive and negative consequences.

Urbanisation is also defined by the movement of people from rural to urban areas with population growth equating to urban migration. Hence, it is the increase over time in the population of cities in relation to the region’s rural population. Urbanisation has intense effects on the ecology and economy of a region.

To gain a better understanding of the term ‘Urbanisation’, it is very essential to know and understand the meaning of some related terms:

1) **Urban** - The origin of term *urban* can be traced back to the early 17th century. It has been derived from Latin word *urbanus*, which has in turn been derived from *urbs* or *urb* meaning ‘city’. The Oxford dictionary defines *urban* as one that is located in or has characteristic of a city or city life.

2) **City** - A city is a relatively large permanent settlement\(^1\). Cities generally have advanced infrastructure and complex systems for sanitation, utilities, land usage, housing, transportation, etc. The concentration of development greatly facilitates interaction between people and businesses, benefiting both parties in the process. A big city usually has associated suburbs and exurbs. Such cities are usually associated with metropolitan/municipal areas and urban areas, creating numerous business commuters travelling to urban centers of employment.

3) **Suburb/Suburban Area** - Suburb mostly refers to a residential area, usually outside administrative boundies of a city. In some cases they may be the actual residential areas of a city within the municipal limit itself. But most often than not, they are separate residential communities within commuting distance of a city. Some suburbs have a degree of political autonomy, and most have lower population density than inner city neighbourhoods. The concept of suburbs, though old, became popular in the 19th and 20th century as a result of improved public transport such as road and rail. Normally, suburbs tend to proliferate around cities that have an abundance of adjacent flat land. Any particular suburban area is referred to as a *suburb*, while suburban areas on the whole are referred to as the *suburbs* or *suburbia*, with the demonym being a *suburbanite*.

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4) **Exurb** - The expression *exurb* (for “extra-urban”) was coined by Auguste Comte Spectorsky in his 1955 book *The Exurbanites* to describe the ring of prosperous communities beyond the suburbs that are commuter towns for an urban area.² It is a non-rural development that is within a metropolitan area, but outside the urban area. Most exurbs serve as commuter towns and typically have average incomes much higher than nearby rural areas. Depending on local circumstances, some exurbs have higher poverty levels than suburbs nearer the city.

5) **Urban Area** - An urban area is characterised by higher population density and vast human features in comparison to areas surrounding it. Urban areas may be cities, towns or conurbations³, but the term is not commonly extended to rural settlements such as villages and hamlets. Urban areas are created and further developed by the process of urbanisation. Measuring the extent of an urban area helps in analysing population density and urban sprawl, and in determining urban and rural populations.

6) **Urban Sprawl** - Urban sprawl is the irresponsible, and often poorly planned urban development that destroys green space, increases traffic, contributes to air pollution, leads to congestion with crowding and does not contribute significantly to revenue. Increasingly, the impact of population growth on urban sprawl has become a topic of discussion and debate.

To explain the definition of Urban area and Urbanisation more clearly, let us examine the following phrases provided by United Nations Statistics Division. The *United Nations Demographic Yearbook: Population Density and Urbanisation*, states⁴:

“Because of national differences in the characteristics that distinguish urban from rural areas, the distinction between the urban and the rural population is not yet amenable to a single definition that would be applicable to all countries or, for the most part, even to the countries within a region. Where there are no regional recommendations on the matter, countries must establish their own definitions in accordance with their own needs.

The traditional distinction between urban and rural areas within a country has been based on the assumption that urban areas, no matter how they are defined, provide a different way of life and usually a higher standard of living than are found in rural areas. In many industrialised countries, this distinction has become blurred and the principal difference between urban and rural areas in terms of the circumstances of living tends to be a matter of the degree of concentration of population. Although the differences between urban and rural ways of life and standards of living remain significant in developing countries, rapid urbanisation in these countries has created a great need for information related to different sizes of urban areas.

Hence, although the traditional urban-rural dichotomy is still needed, classification by size of locality can usefully supplement the dichotomy or even replace it where the major concern is with characteristics related only to density along the continuum from the most sparsely settled areas to the most densely built-up localities.

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³ The National Capital Region (NCR) is a Tri-state region and an example of conurbation. NCR is a conurbation or metropolitan area which encompasses the entire National Capital Territory of Delhi as well as urban areas ringing it in neighbouring states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and some portions of Rajasthan. With a total area of about 33,578 km² (12,965 sq mi) it has an estimated population of 21,961,994 in 2007.
⁴ United Nations Statistics Division which collects, compiles and disseminates data from national statistical offices on population density and urbanisation through the Demographic Yearbook data collection system has compiled data population density in urban areas.
Density of settlement may not, however, be a sufficient criterion in many countries, particularly where there are large localities that are still characterised by a truly rural way of life. Such countries will find it necessary to use additional criteria in developing classifications that are more distinctive than a simple urban rural differentiation. Some of the additional criteria that may be useful are the percentage of the economically active population employed in agriculture, the general availability of electricity and/or piped water in living quarters and the ease of access to medical care, schools and recreation facilities. For certain countries where the facilities noted above are available in some areas that are still rural since agriculture is the predominant source of employment, it might be advisable to adopt different criteria in different parts of the country. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that the definition used does not become too complicated for application to the census and for comprehension by the users of the census results.

Even in the industrialised countries, it may be considered appropriate to distinguish between agricultural localities, market towns, industrial centers, service centers and so forth, within size-categories of localities.

2. Features of Urbanisation

Urbanisation occurs primarily due to economic reasons. People move into cities to seek economic opportunities. They come to urban areas from rural areas with the aim of improving their standard of living beyond basic sustenance.

Rural society is primarily agrarian. In rural areas, the main source of income is from agriculture. Cities, in contrast, are believed to be places where money, services and wealth are centralised. Hence people from typically non-urban societies identify cities as a place where social mobility is possible.

This notion is true to a large extent as living in cities permits individuals and families to take advantage of the opportunities of proximity, diversity, and marketplace competition. Businesses, which generate jobs and capital, are usually located in urban areas. Whether the source is trade or tourism, it is also through the cities that foreign money flows into a country. To utilise such opportunities, individuals and corporates encourage urbanisation so as to reduce time and expense in commuting and transportation while improving opportunities for jobs, education, housing, and transportation.

Urban society promises better basic services as well as other specialist services that may not be found in rural areas. There are more job opportunities and a greater variety of jobs. Health is another major factor. People, especially the elderly are often forced to move to cities where there are doctors and hospitals that can cater for their health needs. Other factors include a greater variety of entertainment (restaurants, movie theaters, theme parks, etc.) and a better quality of education, namely universities. Due to their high populations, urban areas can also have much more diverse social communities allowing others to find people like them when they might not be able to in rural areas.

Urbanisation is an index of transformation from traditional rural economies to modern industrial one. It is a long term process. It is progressive concentration of population in urban unit. Quantification of urbanisation is very difficult. It is a long term process of a switch from spread out pattern of human settlements to one of concentration in urban centers. It is a finite process—a cycle through which a nation pass as they evolve from agrarian to industrial society.

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The onset of modern and universal process of urbanisation is relatively a recent phenomenon and is closely related with industrial revolution and associated economic development. Historical evidence suggests that urbanisation process is inevitable and universal.

In his paper, ‘The urbanisation of the human population’, sociologist Davis Kingsley explains about three stages in the process of urbanisation. Stage one is the initial stage characterised by rural traditional society with predominance in agriculture and dispersed pattern of settlements. Stage two refers to acceleration stage where basic restructuring of the economy and investments in social overhead capitals including transportation, communication take place. Proportion of urban population gradually increases from 25% to 40%, 50%, 60% and so on and dependence on primary sector gradually dwindles. Third stage is known as terminal stage where urban population exceeds 70% or more. At this stage level of urbanisation remains more or less same or constant. Rate of growth of urban population and total population becomes same at this terminal stage.

If we try examining this three stage theory proposed by Kingsley, we can see that currently developed countries are characterised by high level of urbanisation and some of them are in final stage of urbanisation process and experiencing slowing down of urbanisation due to a host of factors. A majority of the developing countries, on the other hand started experiencing urbanisation only since the middle of 20th century.

![Figure 1: Percentage of population which is urbanised, by country, as of 2006](image)

There are a few features that indicate the urbanisation process of a local area. These features or indicators of urbanisation are explained below in brief:

1) **Economic growth** - In recent years, urbanisation of rural areas has increased. Rural economy has traditionally been agrarian. However, this is rapidly changing. More and more traditional local services, and small-scale industries are giving way to modern industry the urban and related commerce with the city drawing on the resources of an ever-widening area for its own sustenance and goods to be traded or processed into manufactures.

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Urbanisation is closely linked to modernisation and industrialisation. It is many a times viewed as a negative trend, but can in fact, be perceived simply as a natural occurrence from individual and corporate efforts to reduce expense in commuting and transportation while improving opportunities for jobs, education, housing, and transportation. Living in cities permits individuals and families to take advantage of the opportunities of proximity, diversity, and marketplace competition. At the same time, as cities develop, effects can include a dramatic increase in costs, often pricing the local working class out of the market, including such functionaries as employees of the local municipalities.

Prior to 1950 the majority of urbanisation occurred in developed countries. Rapid urbanisation took place during the period of industrialisation that took place in Europe and North America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many people moved from rural to urban areas to get jobs in the rapidly expanding industries in many large towns and cities. Since 1950 urbanisation has slowed in most of these countries and now some biggest cities in such countries are losing population as people move away from the city to rural environments. This is known as counter-urbanisation.

Since 1950, however, the most rapid growth in urbanisation has occurred in developing countries, especially in South America, Africa and Asia. Between 1950 and 1990 the urban population living in developing nations has doubled, whereas, in developed countries the increase was less than half.

People move into cities to seek economic opportunities. A major contributing factor (termed sociologically as rural fight) is that in rural areas, often on small family farms, it is difficult to improve one’s standard of living beyond basic sustenance. Agrarian way of life is often unpredictable as a lot depends upon everchanging environmental conditions, and in times of drought, flood or pestilence, survival becomes extremely problematic. In modern times, industrialisation of agricultural practices (or agrarian industrialisation) has negatively affected the economy of small and middle-sized farms and strongly reduced the size of the rural labour market. It is also a result of industrialisation that farms become more mechanised, putting many labourers out of work. Urbanisation and agrarian industrialisation are trends that are currently occurring fastest in India.

2) Migration - Rural to urban migration is happening on a massive scale due to population pressure and lack of resources in rural areas. People living in rural areas are attracted or ‘pulled’ to the city. Often they believe that the standard of living in urban areas will be much better than in rural areas. Most often than not, they are wrong. People also hope for well paid jobs, the greater opportunities to find casual or ‘informal’ work, better health care and education.

Why do people move to cities?

Larger cities are often seen as concentrations of social problems, poverty and high unemployment rates. Thus an interesting question is why do people move to cities? Contemporary migration in developing countries arises from the attraction of the city as compared to the rural areas from which migrants move. Migrants are attracted by better access to public services such as electricity, clinics, schools, as well as better prospects for recreation in cities. Thus, the ‘bright lights’ of the cities may be a pulling factor. However, although some migrants move for these reasons, numerous studies show that migrants respond primarily to economic incentives. People move from poorer areas to wealthier areas for economic gain. Differences in average income or wage levels between rural and urban areas significantly affect migration between two locations. Economic research supports this.
According to the World Bank, the urban-rural wage gap is huge in developing countries. An urban construction worker in Côte d’Ivoire earns 8.8 times the rural wage rate and an urban steel worker in India earns 8.4 times the rural wage in that country. Wages are, in turn, kept high in cities by union pressure, by strict application of minimum wage laws or by the payment of relatively high wages by government and foreign corporations. Thus, rural-urban migration is an example of labour market adjustment.

If economic factors play a critical role in determining rural-urban migration, then urbanisation and city growth are clearly determined by those same factors. Urbanisation and city growth cannot be analysed without giving explicit attention to the interaction between rural and labour markets.

The incentive to stay in the urban area is that a worker improves his prospects of high-wage employment but at the risk of being unemployed. In other words, the urban labour market is therefore like a lottery: a worker buys a ticket (i.e. goes to the city) in the hope of hitting the jackpot (i.e. getting a high-wage job). As with all lotteries, most people lose. Those who seek a job in the high-wage sector but end up unemployed have three options:

- return to the villages whence they came;
- stay and contribute to urban unemployment;
- settle for a low-wage job while waiting for the jackpot.

It seems that the majority of migrants stay. Evidence shows that rural workers migrate to the cities even if they are unlikely to find jobs, provided that they expect to hit the jackpot eventually by obtaining high-wage sector employment. The incentive to wait is the large difference between urban and rural wages.

Migrants are attracted to the cities, not because they are assured of an increase in wages, but because they gamble on being absorbed in high-wage employment and are willing to be unemployed or accept very low wages in the urban labour market for a period of time in the expectation of achieving a high lifetime income. However, the chances of hitting the jackpot fall as more and more rural workers join the ranks of the unemployed. At some point the unemployed are numerous enough to discourage additional migration in excess of the rate at which new jobs were being created in the high-wage sector. In this way, urban unemployment acts as an equilibrium device, eventually choking off the flow of new migrants.

In all developing countries, migration is concentrated in the 15-30 age groups, with a substantial portion in the 15-24 sub-groups. This accords well with the view that economic factors explain rural-urban explanation because the lifetime income gains are largest for the young. Statistical evidence from most countries shows that the probability of migration is generally also higher for the more educated or more aware class of persons.

3) Increase in population - Urbanisation can describe a specific condition at a set time, i.e. the proportion of total population or area in cities or towns, or the term can describe the increase of this proportion over time. So the term urbanisation can represent the level of urban relative to overall population, or it can represent the rate at which the urban proportion is increasing.
Higher rate of migration to cities results in growth of population. There is also a natural increase caused by a decrease in death rates while birth rates remain high. Urbanisation and urban growth have accelerated in many developing countries in the past few years. While natural population growth has been the major contributor to urbanisation, rural-urban migration continues to be an important factor. The processes of urbanisation, population growth and the nature and scale of rural-urban migration have to some extent been shaped by gender roles and relations.

According to the United Nations Population Fund Report, 2007, it was predicted that in a few years more than half the world’s population, i.e. more than 3.3 billion people, will for the first time live in towns and cities, and the number is expected to swell to almost five billion by 2030. However, this urban growth comes with a price. As cities are predicted to edge out rural areas in more than sheer numbers of people, poverty and urban slums are bound to amplify at mammoth proportions. Poverty is increasing more rapidly in urban areas, and governments need to plan for where the poor will live rather than leaving them to settle illegally in shanties without sewerage and other services.

In Latin America, where urbanisation occurred earlier than in other developing regions, many countries and cities ignored or tried unsuccessfully to retard urban growth. According to sociologists, levels of insecurity and violence in Latin America are a product of this approach. People have been left to fend for themselves and have created these enormous slums.

4) Social & cultural integration - As cities grow, the diversity of population grow with it. In contemporary cities, there exists a continuous process of integration of different cultures and societies. This interaction and communication between different cultures provides opportunities for the cultural differences to raise as well as the scope of tolerance and acceptance resulting in harmonious communication and interaction between diverse groups, thereby creating the sociological phenomenon of multiculturalism. This understanding of multiculturalism has resulted in two different and seemingly inconsistent strategies. Firstly, the harmonious interaction between different cultures, based on tolerance and mutual appreciation; and secondly, promotion and maintenance of cultural uniqueness. Promotion of cultural uniqueness might sometimes be based on cultural isolation of the local culture of a nation or area and also contribute to global cultural diversity.

This burgeoning intergeneration of different cultures known as multiculturalism is enhancing the fabric of societies around the world, bringing colour and vibrancy to every city it touches. While there is still resistance to the integration of immigrants into some of the world’s global cities, multiculturalism is an urban phenomenon that has to be accepted as the contemporary reality. More importantly, multiculturalism needs to be supported by local governments, to combat xenophobic ideologies and anti-immigration policies. At the same time it is equally true that cities cannot continue perpetually to take whatever a new-comer can give, and in return, offer little more than a room in a slum with a dim view of the future.

In the twenty-first century, cities are where diversity is mainly concentrated, and were most conflicts based on multiculturalism arise, creating a rich diversity of social, cultural, religious traditions. Cities as Rotterdam or Brussels are examples of places were the diversity is already common, but other cities as Barcelona are only recently facing this phenomenon.
5) **Efficient services** - Urban areas are ideally expected to have higher level of infrastructural quality and higher efficiency of services. In cities are known to have specialised civic amenities that rural areas lack, such as piped water, sewerage, electricity, telecom services, health care, transportation, education, etc. As mentioned before, cities are known to be places where money, services and wealth are centralised. Hence, there is a possibility of social mobility.

Modern cities are expected to have basic services which in turn seem to guarantee a quality life with reasonable high standards of living. Hence, cities are planned in such a way that they have a well-developed infrastructure that include water supply systems, sewage treatment, waste recycling, health care facilities, education, and energy supplies, maintaining high qualities of life. Efficient transportation systems having good roads, railway and airway connectivity services are the lifeline of a city.

Sadly, in reality, the quality and reliability of local services are taken for granted in highly industrialised countries, but limited access to, or poor quality of, infrastructure services in developing countries can be major impediments to business productivity, and major sources of frustration to the population. The poorest households in developing countries generally cannot afford household connections of telephone and electricity, and often only have access to primitive or communal water supply and sewage and solid waste disposal systems. As well as reducing the quality of life in settlements, the absence of connection to basic services makes communities living in informal settlements particularly vulnerable to disease and epidemics.

6) **Resource utilisation** - Urban economies are integral to the process of economic transformation and development. Ideal cities are, rather should be, planned in such a way that they make optimum use of resources to benefit maximum possible persons, whether residents of that city or otherwise. Sustainable use of resources results from innovative and effective planning and management. Cities today need maximised alternative energy sources, including solar and wind power, thereby reducing dependencies on fossil fuels. Land use policies encourage mixed use of land that encourages growth of not just industries and commercial units but also agriculture, handloom, cottage industries and Small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Proper planning shall put workplaces near homes, minimising commuting, thereby reducing the use of fuels. Promotion of heterogeneous mixes of housing types, from affordable to luxury, meeting the needs of community members; and high qualities of life through the development of civic amenities, such as green spaces and cultural centers are the characteristics of modern city planning.

7) **Growth of commercial activities** - Cities are a prerequisite for the creation of a diversified economic base capable of generating employment opportunities. Urban growth gives rise to economies of such a scale. Industries benefit from concentrations of suppliers and consumers which allow savings in communications and transport costs. Large cities also provide big differentiated labour markets and may help accelerate the pace of technological innovation. Urban growth also allows economies of scale in such services as water supply and electric power to be exploited. Evidence from India suggests that substantial economies of scale are found in cities of up to 150,000 inhabitants. Cities are the engines of economic growth. Though cities concentrate poverty, but on a happier note, they also represent the best hope of escaping it.
What is Urbanisation?

1. Types of Urban Areas

Modern cities are relatively large and permanent settlements. Although there is no agreement on how a city is distinguished from a town, the distinction lies on a purely legal basis as cities have completely different administrative status than that of a town. Different forms of urbanisation can be classified depending on the style of architecture and planning methods as well as the historic growth of areas.

In modern cities, urbanisation trend usually exhibits a concentration of human activities and settlements around the downtown area. This is called in-migration, which typically means migration from former colonies and similar places. The fact that many immigrants settle in impoverished city centers led to the notion of the “peripheralisation of the core”, which simply describes that people who used to be at the periphery of the former empires now live right in the centre.

Generally in the urban hierarchy, villages are smaller than towns and towns are smaller than cities. Each country has its own definition of a city or an urban area. It is difficult to compare countries based on the percentage of urban population since many countries have different definitions of what size population is necessary to make a community “urban”.

In Sweden and Denmark, a village of 200 people is counted as an “urban” population but it takes a city of 30,000 in Japan. Most other countries fall somewhere in between. Australia and Canada use 1000, Israel and France use 2000 and the United States and Mexico call a town of 2500 residents urban.

Due to these differences, we have a problem with comparisons. Let us assume that in Japan and in Denmark there are 100 villages of 250 people each. In Denmark, all of these 25,000 people are counted as “urban” residents but in Japan, the residents of these 100 villages are all “rural” populations. Similarly, a single city with a population of 25,000 would be an urban area in Denmark but not in Japan.
Japan is 78% and Denmark is 85% urbanised. Unless we are aware of what size of a population makes an area urban we can not simply compare the two percentages and say “Denmark is more urbanised than Japan”.

There is considerable confusion about terms used to describe urbanisation, especially the term city. As used generally on Demographia websites\(^9\) urban terms are defined as follows:

- **City** generally means a municipality, which would typically have locally elected administration such as a city council and a mayor. In some cases a city can also be a higher-level region, such as the ville de Paris, which is also a department; San Francisco, which is also a county; the city of Shanghai, which is also a provincial level administrative district, the city of Vienna, which is also a state, the city of Berlin, which is also a lander, the city of Mumbai, which is also a region. In each of these cases, there is a single municipality, though there may be divisions of the municipality that have varying degrees of control over local functions (such as the arrondissements of Paris, the municipalities of Berlin or the wards of Mumbai).

- **Municipality/Local Authority Area**: The term city might be simply the historical core municipality (local authority area), such as the city of Chicago or the ville de Paris or any other municipality. Thus, a metropolitan area or an urban area generally has many municipalities or cities. The Paris metropolitan area has 1,300 cities, the New York metropolitan area more than 700 cities and the St. Louis metropolitan area nearly 400 cities. There are few major metropolitan areas in the world that do not contain multiple cities. No metropolitan area with more than 1,000,000 population in Western Europe, the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia or New Zealand has a single municipal government.

- **Metropolitan Area**: United States, France, Brazil, India, Argentina, and Canada formally designate metropolitan areas. Caution must also be used with respect to the term “metropolitan”. For example, some jurisdictions within metropolitan areas are called “metropolitan” but are only a part of the metropolitan area. For example, Metro Manila (the National Capital Region in the Philippines) represents less than two-thirds of the metropolitan area. The municipality of metropolitan Toronto, Canada comprises less than one-half of the metropolitan area. Further, the term “Greater” is often used to denote a metropolitan area, such as “Greater Los Angeles”, “Greater NOIDA” or “Greater Chicago”. Again, this term is imprecise, because it is also used in some situations to denote municipalities that are only a part of a metropolitan area. For example, “Greater New York” is the official name of the city of New York, which contains only 40 per cent of the metropolitan area population. The municipality of Mumbai, which is formally called the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, comprises approximately two-thirds of the Mumbai metropolitan area.

- **Central City**: The central city or core city is the municipality in an urban area or metropolitan area that emerged historically as the most prominent in the urban area. Almost without exception, the name of the core city is also shared with the urban area and the metropolitan area. For example, the metropolitan area that includes and surrounds the city of New York is the New York metropolitan area or the New York urban area. Usually the core city will be the largest in the urban area or metropolitan area. However, this is not always so. San Jose, not a core city, is now the largest city in the San Francisco metropolitan area. Usually an urban area or metropolitan area will have many

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cities (the Paris metropolitan area has more than 1,000 municipalities or communes). The core city of Chicago, with nearly 3,000,000 residents, is just one of many cities in the Chicago metropolitan area or the Chicago urban area. It is, however, possible for the city to be larger than either the urban area or the metropolitan area. Examples are Anchorage, Alaska, and the Chinese cities of Chongqing, Shanghai, Beijng, and Tianjin. At the same time, a central city may be relatively small in relation to the corresponding urban area or metropolitan area. For example, according to the 2001 census, the city of Sydney had a population of less than 50,000, out of an urban area with 3.5 million residents, while Adelaide had a population of under 20,000, out of an urban area of approximately 1.0 million. A core municipality usually includes the historical core. However, through annexation and consolidation, a central city can absorb areas that are suburban in character. This has occurred in cities such as Portland, Los Angeles, San Antonio, Toronto, Mumbai and Rome.

♣ The Urban Core/ Inner City: Generally the urban core or the inner city is in the central city. Sometimes the urban core includes adjacent municipalities that developed during the same period as the core city. For example, Frederiksburg is a part of the core of the Copenhagen urban area, L’Hospitalet is a part of the core of the Barcelona urban area, and Cambridge is a part of the core of the Boston urban area core.

♣ Suburb: Collectively, the suburbs are all of the continuous urbanisation that extends beyond the core city (all of the urban area except the historical core municipality and other adjacent historical municipalities). A specific suburb can be an individual municipality or community in the suburbs.

♣ Exurban: Exurban refers to non-rural development that is within a metropolitan area, but outside the urban area. There are two types of exurban development:

♣ Exurb: An exurb is a municipality (or a community) or urban area in a metropolitan area that is separated by rural territory from the principal urban area. For example, DeKalb and Kankakee are exurbs of Chicago. The urban areas that are within the London metropolitan area, but outside the greenbelt, are exurbs, such as St. Albans and Milton Keynes.

— Low Density Exurban Development: Low density exurban development is generally large lot residential development that is not of sufficient density to be considered urban and is not agricultural.

♣ Urban Area means an area of continuous urban development. An urban area will virtually never be the same as a municipality. Usually it will include many municipalities, though in the case of many geographically large municipalities, such as Anchorage or Shanghai, the urban area will be smaller than the core city. The Chicago urban area (population over 8,000,000) includes the city of Chicago and many other cities.

Some nations formally designate urban areas. For example, “urbanised areas” in the United States, “unites urbaines” in France, “urban areas” in the United Kingdom and Canada, “urban centers” in Australia and “urban agglomerations” in India.

An urban area is also an agglomeration. A conurbation is an urban area that forms when two or more urban areas grow together, as has occurred in Osaka-Kobe-Kyoto, Essen-Dusseldorf (the “Rhine-Ruhr-Wupper”), Katowice-Gliwice (Poland), or the Washington and Baltimore urban areas, which are converging into a single urban area. Demographia has developed the
only comprehensive list of world urban areas over 500,000 population with land area and densities.

Apart from the above-mentioned terminologies, there are other modern connotations associated with urban areas.

**Satellite Town** - Satellite cities are self-sufficient communities outside of their larger metropolitan areas, but have become interconnected due to the suburban expansion of the larger metropolis. However, satellite cities do not have their independent metropolitan government and they are very much physically integrated with the core city. It is impossible for a satellite city to exist in anything like their present form if not for the suburban expansion of their larger neighbour.

Some satellite cities that are particularly close or well connected to their larger neighbours and/or have their own historic downtown may also qualify as the *Uptown areas*.

**Multi-polar cities**

In some cases large metropolitan areas have multiple centers of close to equal importance. These multi-polar cities are often referred to as twin cities. Multi-polar cities differ from satellite cities in two key ways:

- **Satellites** are clearly much less important than the larger center around which they are located, while the various nodes of multi-polar cities are close to each other in importance
- **Satellites** are separated from the larger center by a substantial belt of rural territory, while twin cities may be fully integrated in physical form

**Techno-park/Technology Park** - “Technology park” is a vague term by all accounts, used to describe a variety of efforts to stimulate the development of “entrepreneurial, knowledge-based small and medium-sized enterprises” (or SMEs) within a country. The term numerous synonyms, with the most common being “science park”, “research park” and “technopole”. New terms are constantly arising as technology parks attempt to distinguish themselves from the considerable competition of at least 295 technology parks worldwide.

The concept of technology parks was conceived in United States. Such areas have been in existence since at least the early 1950’s and have since spread around the world, with new technology parks continually arising. Originally, the term “technology park” had a very limited definition, focusing on the real estate aspect of the park concept, in which universities typically leased real estate, office space or research facilities to businesses. The term, however, has evolved to include a much broader range of functions, including economic development and technology transfer.

While definitions on the subject vary widely, the term generally denotes as an area that:

- is linked with educational or research institutions
- provides infrastructure and support services for businesses, particularly real estate and office space
- performs a technology transfer function
- performs an economic development function
The following is a list of terms that are often used interchangeably with “technology park”:

- business park
- cyber park
- hi-tech park
- industrial park
- innovation center
- R&D park
- research park
- research and technology park
- science and technology park
- science city
- science park
- technology incubator
- technology park
- technopark
- technopole

4. Urbanisation in India

The urbanisation of India is taking place at a faster rate than in the rest of the world. According to the United Nations’ ‘State of the World Population 2007’ report, by 2030, 40.76 per cent of India’s population will be living in urban areas compared to about 28.4 per cent now.

But at the same time, the report adds, metropolitan cities like Mumbai and Kolkata have a far greater number of people moving out than coming in. In most regions, the rate of urbanisation is showing a decline except in growing economies like India. Mega cities are still dominant but they have not grown to the size once projected and have consistently declined in most world regions, the report says.

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. About 56 per cent of the urban population lives in slum conditions. The report also says that in countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the literacy rate of women living in slums is as low as 52 per cent.

For countries like India, the report says, getting ready for the aging population is another big challenge. In Chennai, it says, total fertility rate has fallen to below replacement levels. The city has closed down 10 maternity clinics and reopened them as geriatric units.

The population of towns and cities in developing countries like India is set to double in the space of a generation, while the urban population in the developed world is expected to grow relatively lower, the report says.

In comparison to the urban population growth rate, the world’s rural population is expected to decrease by some 28 million between 2005 and 2030.
It can thus represent a level of urban population relative to total population of the area, or the rate at which the urban proportion is increasing. Urbanisation can result from either:

- an increase in the extent of urban areas
- an increase in the density of urban areas

For instance, US and UK have a far higher urbanisation level than countries like India, China, Swaziland or Nigeria, but a far slower annual urbanisation rate, since much less of the population is living in a rural area while in the process of moving to the city.

In terms of a place, urbanisation means increased spatial scale and/or density of settlement and/or business and other activities in the area over time. The process could occur either as natural expansion of the existing population (usually not a major factor since urban reproduction tends to be lower than rural), the transformation of peripheral.

Indian culture started with urban centers like Harrapa and Mohenjodaro (dated between 2000-4000 BC). India has gone through many cycles of urbanisation and rural migration.

The last de-urbanisation happened at the the start of British Colonialism during the 1800-1850 period. Cities like Dhaka (at that time, a part of India) lost between 50 to 80 per cent of its population. British Colonialism immediately started flooding India with its Manchester & Lancaster wares and restricted Indian handloom weavers from competing with British goods. This was one of the major contributing factors of de-urbanisation during that era.

**Urbanisation in India: The Current Scenario** - In Census of India, 2001 two types of town were identified:

a) **Statutory towns**: All places with a municipality, corporation, Cantonment board or notified town area committee, etc. so declared by state law.

b) **Census towns**: Places which satisfy following criteria:

   i) A minimum population of 5000;
   
   ii) At least 75% of male working population engaged in non agricultural pursuits
   
   iii) A density of population of at least 400 persons per sq km

In post independent India, in the last 60 years has seen a shift of 30 crore people from villages to cities (which is nearly the population of the entire USA). In 1947, India’s urban population was 6 crores (60 million) - and in 2008, it is estimated to have crossed 36 crores (360 million). Another 500 million are expected to move in the next twenty years.

It is the largest demographic shift in the history of mankind — without wars, revolts or persecution\(^{10}\). Most revolts, wars and upheavals have been accompanied by urbanisation. Urbanisation as the cause or an enabler of the revolutions is a matter of debate, research and conjecture.

This kind of urban growth is unprecedented and unparalleled. It shows the tremendous adaptability and resilience of the Indian. The Indian urban concept aspires towards foreign idiom — and that is the problem. What Indian cities need instead, is to learn from the home grown examples. For instance, the Mumbai urban train transport system. For a monthly cost

\(^{10}\) Sanghi Anuraag, “The Urbanisation Experience - The World & India”, Current Affairs: Environment, European History, India, March 17, 2008
of Rs.70-200, people in Mumbai can travel any number of times, in relative discomfort. It is a safe mode of transport — unlike the legacy rail system of the Colonial Britain, which India modernised over 35 years. Accidents on this system happen due to its popularity — overcrowded trains. It is also profitable and devoid of subsidies. Similar metros (not in scale or traffic though) have come up in Kolkata and New Delhi. Delhi Metro has been by far the best example of modern infrastructure development for a contemporary Indian city. It is a modernised version of convenient public transport in an urban area and more evolved from its predecessor public transport systems in Kolkata (metro and trams) and Mumbai (local trains). These are the kind of models that we need to follow in our country.

What Indian cities needs is an Indian idiom — to solve the problems of these Indian cities.

**Figure 3: Some statistics on Indian cities**
5. Conclusion

Huge and growing cities are a feature of many developing countries - it is predicted that by early next century 22 of the world’s largest 27 cities will be in developing countries.

There are certain facts about urbanisation trends:

- Cities have a certain lure in terms of migration of inhabitants. The major factor that affects such migration is largely economic. It is a belief in people that urban wages are very substantially higher than rural wages.

- High urban wages are maintained by minimum wage laws, union pressure and the presence of high-wage employers (often governments and multinational corporations) so equilibrium is reached not by the adjustment of wages but by high unemployment.

- The fact that it is mostly the young and the educated that migrate supports this economic explanation of rural-urban migration because these workers have the most to gain in terms of lifetime earnings.

- Decisions to migrate to urban areas result in many external costs as cities become large – pollution, noise and congestion are some examples of these external costs.

- In the presence of migration externalities it is likely that there will be over-urbanisation.

6. References and Recommended Readings


UNIT 2
CHALLENGES OF URBAN SOCIETIES

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1. Introduction

Cities increasingly seem to share compatible systems of commerce, identical leisure pursuits and cuisine, similar social relations, and uniform built environments. There is plenty of evidence that proves that all cities are fast developing characteristic convergence across the planet. There exist uniform ways of life: language; architectural styles; leisure; fashions; sports; etc.

Take for example the spread across the globe of US cultural products, such as Hollywood films, McDonald and Subway cuisine and Coca-cola. The spread of such products helps explain why the beverages and entertainment in not just the west but in any Indian city as well has become so monotonously familiar to any global traveller.

The process of cultural integration has come about and accelerated in recent years due to a number of factors:

♣ Technological change (ease of long distance travel and recent developments in communications)
♣ The influence of Muli-national companies and brand equity
♣ Global media networks
♣ The expansion in world trade
♣ International migration
♣ Cultural imperialism (colonisation influencing a uniform western culture and values)

There are a variety of ways in which culture can be spread and be adopted or adapted around the globe. For instance, through the media, brand images, food, music, religion, sport, fashion, etc.

Urbanisation is a major phenomenon of contemporary world, an indicator of globalisation. Although uncertainty prevails about future trends, urbanisation is an essential but often neglected component of the demographic transition and of development at large. Internal migrations incepted city growth in the first phase of the urban transition and, more recently, urban spatial expansion (informal settlements, suburbanisation, etc.).

While natural growth has taken over in latest phase of the urban transition, migrations remain very intense. Their patterns diversify as much as the socio-demographic characteristics of
the migrants. Circular migration between urban and rural areas, between cities or between villages is becoming more frequent. Similarly, despite environmental constraints and economic downturn, migrations to peri-urban areas remain important and extend to increasingly distant areas. Internal migrations are still under-documented and under-studied, in spite of their role in urbanisation and population history, of their high number and of their socio-economic relevance for households and communities as well as for regions and countries.

2. Adverse Effects of Urbanisation

Cities take up less than two per cent of the Earth’s land surface, but are home to almost half of the world’s population and utilise seventy-five per cent of the Earth’s resources. In 1998 47 per cent of the world’s population lived in cities as opposed to 29 per cent in 1950. Globalisation is leading to increased urbanisation. According to the World Bank urban areas in developing countries account for an estimated 60-80 per cent of GDP. Urban populations mainly have greater access to water and sanitation services, but an estimated quarter to a half of those populations live in slums or squatter settlements. People living under those overcrowded and impoverished conditions increases the likelihood of epidemics like tuberculosis, diarrhoea and other contagious diseases.

The push factors like population growth and unemployment etc. and pull factors like opportunities in the urban areas are debated in the studies of India’s urbanisation. The National Commission on Urbanisation (1988) has termed them as factors of demographic and economic momentum respectively. The urban population of the world was estimated to be 2.96 billion in 2000. It was estimated that nearly 50 million people are added to the world’s urban population and about 35 million to the rural population each year. The share of world’s population living in urban centers has increased from 39 per cent in 1980 to 48 per cent in 2000. The developed countries have higher urbanisation level (76 per cent in 2000) compared with the developing countries (40 per cent). The urbanisation level has almost stabilised in the developed countries.

The effects of urbanisation are clearly visible in Mega-cities. Mega-cities are defined as cities with populations in excess of 10 million, and a population density of at least 2,000 people per square km. For instance, city of Lagos currently has a population density of 4,193 people per sq. km. Mega-cities in the developing world are on a path to becoming pressure cookers of inequality.

In China, the world’s most populous nation, urbanites are expected to outnumber people in rural areas within a decade. China would then have 83 cities with more than 750,000 residents, but only five with a population of more than five million.

Many experts predict that the bulk of the urban population growth will be in smaller cities and towns, not the ten megacities that dominate the public imagination. The future lies in places like Gabarone, Botswana, where the population is projected to reach 500,000 in 2020, up from 18,000 in 1971, as much as it does in chaotic, sprawling metropolises like Lagos, Nigeria.

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1 According to the Forbes magazine, in its article “By The Numbers: Megacities of the Future”, world top 10 megacities of the future are: Tokyo, Japan; Mumbai, India; Mexico City, Mexico; Sao Paulo, Brazil; New York City, United States; Delhi, India; Shanghai, China; Kolkata, India; Dhaka, Bangladesh; Jakarta, Indonesia.
Among the megacities with populations of more than 10 million, only Lagos and Dhaka, Bangladesh, are expected to grow at rates exceeding 3 per cent over the coming decade. Such supersize cities today contain 9 per cent of all urban inhabitants, while cities and towns of fewer than 500,000 account for more than half. According to the State of World Population Report of 2007¹ “Many of the world’s largest cities — Buenos Aires, Calcutta, Mexico City, São Paulo and Seoul — actually have more people moving out than in”.

Adverse impacts of such unplanned and rapid urbanisation are numerous. They affect us in form of Socio-economic impacts, Socio-cultural impacts as well as Environmental/Ecological impacts:

I) **Socio-economic Impacts**

1) **Urban Sprawl** - Urban sprawl is the unchecked spreading of a city or its suburbs. It often involves the construction of residential and commercial buildings in rural areas or otherwise undeveloped land at the outskirts of a city. Most residents of typical urban sprawl neighbourhoods live in single-family homes and commute by car to their jobs in the city. Concerns over urban sprawl and its consequences have been raised and largely focus on negative consequences for residents and the local environment. On the other hand, some argue that “urban sprawl” illustrates positive growth of a local economy.

The term *urban sprawl* is generally used with negative connotations. Because people in sprawling neighbourhoods tend to drive more than those who don’t, urban sprawl is sometimes associated with increased pollution levels of all nature, particularly air pollution. It has also been linked to obesity since walking or bicycling usually are not viable commuting options for those commuting from the outskirts of a city into town.

Traditional cities, like many small and mid-sized cities in modern-day Europe, were typically oriented in a compact and efficient way. Preferences of many people, especially in the United States, have led suburban development — accommodating for the development in an outward instead of upward manner. Developments such as shopping malls, fast food chains, strip malls, and housing subdivisions are especially typical of urban sprawl. Subdivisions are often cited as primary examples of a less efficient use of space that characterises sprawl. These layouts often only have a few places to enter and exit, causing main roads to have more traffic at these points.

Urban sprawl is often happens quickly, as opposed to gradually. Another key characteristic its low-density land use, where the amount of land consumed per capita is much higher than in more densely populated city areas. Wide streets, large manicured lawns, and artificial landscaping are typical in this pattern.

Single-use zoning might also be a common part of urban sprawl. This city planning approach separates residential, commercial, and industrial areas from one another, usually by a distance that is not conducive with walking thereby increasing the importance on vehicles. While public transportation is typically available in the suburbs, most of these areas are highly dependent on cars. Urban sprawl, while common in developed countries, is not limited to them. Many cities in developing countries, such as Delhi, Mexico City, etc. experience it as well.

While the term *urban sprawl* typically is used with negative connotations, the economic growth that it supports is viewed as a positive thing by many. In addition, many support the community structure of a suburb as opposed to a city as the pace of life is typically slower and space is not at such a premium. Additionally, suburbs are often, though not necessarily, said to be safer, and as a result these areas are often places people move to raise their children.

2) **Urban Slums** - A slum, as defined by the UN-HABITAT is a run-down area of a city characterised by substandard housing and squalor and lacking in tenure security. The term has traditionally referred to housing areas that were once relatively affluent but which deteriorated as the original dwellers moved on to newer and better parts of the city, but has come to include the vast informal or unauthorised settlements found in cities in the developing world.

Although their characteristics vary between geographic regions, they are usually inhabited by the very poor or socially disadvantaged. Slum buildings vary from simple shacks to permanent and well-maintained structures. Most slums lack clean water, electricity, sanitation and other basic services.

According to the *United Nations Millenium Development Goals Report, 2007*; the proportion of urban dwellers living in slums has decreased from 47 per cent to 37 per cent in the developing world between 1990 and 2005. However, due to rising population, the absolute number of slum dwellers is rising. The majority of these come from the fringes of urban margins, located in legal and illegal settlements with insufficient housing and sanitation. This has been caused by massive migration, both internal and transnational, into cities, which has caused growth rates of urban populations and spatial concentrations not seen before in history. These issues raise problems in the political, social, and economic arenas. Slum dwellers often have minimal or no access to education, healthcare, or the urban economy.

Many shack dwellers vigorously oppose the description of their communities as ‘slums’ arguing that this results in them being pathologised and then, often, subject to threats of evictions. Many academics have vigorously criticized UN-Habitat and the World Bank arguing that their ‘Cities Without Slums’ Campaign has led directly to a massive increase in forced evictions.

3) **Excessive Pressure to Develop modern Urban Infrastructure** - As there is a growth in the rate of urbanisation, there is bound to be an increase in rate population as a result. Urbanisation, in terms of infrastructure would technically cover areas such as housing and land, waste management, urban services, and local economic development. It includes sub-sectors such as Urban Water and Sanitation, and Urban Transport. As there is a growth in urbanisation, it is expected that there is a rapid growth in urban infrastructure so as to maintain a decent urban standard. This might put tremendous pressure encouraging over-utilisation of resources so as to build and maintain city standards. Hence measures should be taken to curb such over-utilisation that is not bound to be economically and ecologically viable.

For instance, rapid urbanisation can promote traffic congestion, which is a condition on road networks that occurs as use of transport increases, and is characterised by slower speeds, longer trip times, and increased vehicular queuing.
Urban infrastructure is linked to the environment through pollution management and public health issues. In developing countries, rapid urbanisation is a major challenge that may have significant health related environmental impacts affecting poor people. Hence there has to be an effort towards planning and following sustainable urban infrastructure practices. Generally speaking the following could be considered sustainable urban infrastructure:

- Public transport networks
- Distributed generation and integrated energy demand management
- High efficiency buildings and other development constraints such as green buildings and sustainable habitats with energy efficient landscaping
- Connected green spaces and wildlife corridors
- Low impact development practices to protect water and other natural resources

4) **Congestion** - Many households in cities have to cope with increasingly crowded conditions, although this is certainly not true for everyone. The housing conditions improve when residents build high buildings, sometimes up to five stories, increasing the amount of available indoor floor surface. Many cities have very high population densities because numerous rooms are rented out to migrants. Poor migrants live under the most crowded conditions. They do not have access to ancestral residential land. Therefore, they depend on rented accommodation, which they often share with many others to save money.

Some poor households of the original population also live in very crowded dwellings for two other reasons. First, many families expand and split up into multiple households, while the land available for construction becomes unaffordable. They are thus forced to fit more people into the same space or house or else to split up existing plots and dwellings to accommodate a new household. Second, in the absence of sufficient income from other sources, some households are inclined to rent out a portion of their living space or cattle sheds to tenants.

Apart from housing, another problem arising due to congestion is shortage of space to facilitate free traffic movement. Due to shortage of space, roads, including main roads within large or mega-cities, are simply not wide enough. In India, most of the places, whether urban or rural, face this kind of problem. The only exception to this rule probably is the city of Delhi that is equipped with wide main roads at least. Widening the street is a difficult affair. Not only are the houses built very close to the road, but commercial encroachments are inevitable, due to the high profitability of running a shop or other business along the main road. Demolition is a politically sensitive issue. Construction of by-pass roads is often planned after the built-up area already surrounds the village, when it is more difficult to clear land.

II) **Socio-cultural Impacts**

1) **Homelessness** - Mega-cities often have significant numbers of homeless people. The actual legal definition of homelessness varies from country to country, or among different entities or institutions in the same country or region.
2) **Urban Bias** - Over urbanisation leads to inequality, urban bias and gentrification. Gentrification is the socio-cultural change in an area resulting from wealthier people buying housing property in a less prosperous community due to shortage of land resource elsewhere. Consequent to gentrification, the average income increases and average family size decreases in the community, which may result in the informal economic eviction of the lower-income residents, because of increased rents, house prices, property taxes and increase in prices of even basic good resulting from increased purchasing power of locals in the area. This type of population change reduces both industrial as well as agricultural land use when it is redeveloped for commerce and housing. In addition, new businesses, catering to a more affluent base of consumers, tend to move into formerly blighted areas, further increasing the appeal to more affluent migrants and decreasing the accessibility to less wealthy natives of that area. This sudden and unexpected change in gentry leads to inequality and bias within the community.

3) **Land Insecurity** - Slums are usually located on land, which are not owned by the slum dwellers. They can be evicted at any time by the landowners. Ironical to this, there is another situation where a similar fate awaits the traditional owners of a particular land within a city. Due to urban sprawl, many traditional agricultural lands are now notified as lands for commercial and industrial use. As the nature of land use changes, these colonies become unauthorised. This further creates a situation of land insecurity to traditional owners of the land.

4) **Poor Living Conditions** - Crowding and lack of sanitation are main problems. This contributes to outbreak of diseases. Utilities such as water, electricity and sewage disposal are also scarce.

5) **Unemployment** - Since the number of people competing for jobs is more than jobs available, unemployment is an inevitable problem in cities.

6) **Crime** - Slum conditions make maintenance of law and order difficult. Patrolling of slums is not a priority of law enforcing officers. Unemployment and poverty force people into anti-social activities. Slums and unauthorised colonies become a breeding ground for criminal activities.

III) **Environmental/ecological Impacts**

The urban heat and warming has become a growing concern and is increasing over the years. Such a situation occurs when industrial and urban areas are developed and heat becomes more abundant. In rural areas, a large part of the incoming solar energy is used to evaporate water from vegetation and soil. Since the population is also scattered and population density per square kilometre is relatively less, rural areas do not exhibit such drastic increase in temperature and change in weather.

In cities, where less vegetation and exposed soil exists, the majority of the sun’s energy is absorbed by urban structures of asphalt. Hence, during warm daylight hours, less evaporative cooling in cities allows surface temperatures to rise higher than in rural areas. Additional city heat is given off by vehicles and factories, as well as by industrial and domestic heating and cooling units. This effect causes the city to become one to six degrees warmer (when measured in celcius) than surrounding landscapes.\(^3\) Impacts also include reducing soil moisture and intensification of carbon dioxide emissions.

\(^3\) *‘Heat Island Effect’* - extracted from the website of U S Environmental Protection Agency
There are three main types of pollution in the rural-urban fringe: air, water and solid waste. Though less noxious, noise pollution and odour are also big contributing factors.

1) **Air pollution** - Air pollution is particularly noticeable in rapidly urbanising villages, where industry tends to be located within or adjacent to the settlements. There, enforcement of environmental legislation is almost non-existent. In the absence of a reliable supply of industrial electricity, low-grade coal is used to fire the furnaces, which causes many factories to emit black smoke. Similarly, brick kilns generate considerable air pollution as well. In rural areas, where they are dispersed in the fields, they are reported to create fewer nuisances for the residents of the settlements, except for those living in the adjacent labour quarters.

At metropolitan/city level, traffic is considered the most important source of air pollution, accounting for approximately 60 to 65 per cent of the total (according to Centre for Science and Environment 1989, United Nations 1995). At the micro level, traffic pollution varies enormously; in the rural-urban fringe, smog is considerably less common. Nonetheless, many villages experience increasing levels of through traffic, although congestion is less than in urban areas.

A frequently heard complaint voiced by people living along busy roads is that the dust created by traffic, especially emitted from the trucks transporting bricks and sand, causes respiratory problems.

2) **Water pollution** - Most water pollution in cities is caused by industries and households. Two of the major contributing factors are lack of good sewerage system as well as heavy effluents released from industrial units. In urban areas, in particular, newspapers frequently report cases of pollution of surface waters and groundwater due to mixing of sewage water. Generally, increased population densities generate more human waste and domestic discharge, which are said to seep into the shallow groundwater. Since almost all villages have access to drinking water on tap, this problem has largely been overcome. The low pressure in the municipal water supply pipes is still a major problem, though.

An interesting study conducted by some non-governmental agencies show that farmers in rural areas generally do not complain of an alleged reduction in the quality of irrigation water due to water pollution. Though salinity of the groundwater is still a problem, quality of surface water normally remains unchanged in rural areas. Obviously, this is not the case in an urban set-up.

3) **Solid waste pollution** - Collection of solid wastes is the responsibility of the municipal authorities. For example, management of solid waste in Delhi is the responsibility of Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). But at the city’s fringes, its capacity often falls short, particularly in the peripheral unauthorised colonies and village extensions. The places that usually become littered with trash are vacant land owned by the government, unused village common lands, and the village pond.

4) **Change in land use** - A key factor in the emergence of environmental problems is the practice of mixing residential and industrial land uses in cities, towns and industrial villages that are located inside and around city limits. Consequently, factories are located very near the residential dwellings. One effective case study for this phenomenon can be the city of Delhi. Delhi has many village clusters located in and around the main city,
most of which now are within the city limits. Villages like Mahipalpur, Najafgarh, Ghari, Nangli Poona, Pehladpur Bangar, etc exit within the heart of the city. In most such so called city villages, more and more residents now have to cope with a factory or industrial unit as their neighbour as their land use patterns have now drastically changed from being traditionally an agricultural land to land now intended for mixed use of residential, industrial and commercial activities.

However, all is not as bad as it looks. There are numerous advantages of living in a city and experiencing an urban life. With proper city planning many side-effects of an urban sprawl can be controlled and regulated to a large extent.

Historical experience suggests that urbanisation is an inevitable process. In the light of this observation, combined with the positive impacts of urbanisation, it is clear that the main challenge at present is not that of slowing-down urbanisation, but of learning how to cope with rapid urban growth. In recognition of the role of cities as engines of economic development, there has recently been a resurgence of interest in urban management as the main tool for coping with rapid urban growth and maximising the positive demographic and socio-economic impacts of urbanisation.

In the next segment, we shall be dealing with the positive impacts of urbanisation.

3. Positive Effects of Urbanisation

The problem that we face today is not due to urbanisation itself. The real problem is rapid urbanisation and urban sprawl, specially in developing countries like India that are not well equipped with managing urbanisation at such a hasty pace.

The UN’s Millennium Development Goals can help to address some of the adverse impacts of rapid urbanisation to a large extent. However, the hitch lies in the fact that these goals must be carefully implemented keeping into account the conditions of each country.

Rather than just letting slums hasty spring up, governments need to anticipate the expanding ranks of the urban poor and provide them with secure housing, water, sanitation and power, among other services, the report says. With decent housing and basic services, the poor can take advantage of the opportunities offered by city life.

Positive effects of Urbanisation

1) Better amenities, housing and health awareness - Over the past few decades, the urban amenities and infrastructure in many urban areas has shown a positive upward curve. As a consequence, even if the standards fail to match that of what is expected in a city, the inhabitants/ city dwellers generally refer to their settlements as being ‘more developed’ in comparison with villages/ rural areas beyond the boundaries of their city. At the same time, complain still remains about the wide gap in the level of amenities and the quality of infrastructure when a comparison in made between the different classes that exist within an urban neighbourhood.

2) Efficiency - Cities are extremely efficient. Less effort is needed to supply basic amenities such as fresh water and electricity. Research and recycling programmes are possible only in cities. In most cities flats are in vogue today. Many people can be accommodated within a small land area.
3) **Convenience** - Access to education, health, social services and cultural activities is readily available to people in cities than in villages. Life in cities is much more advanced, sophisticated and comfortable, compared to life in villages. Cities have advanced communication and transport networks.

4) **Concentration of resources** - Since major human settlements were established near natural resources from ancient times, a lot of resources are available in and around cities. A lot of facilities to exploit these resources also exist only in cities.

5) **Educational facilities** - Schools, colleges and universities are established in cities to develop human resources. A variety of educational courses and fields are available offering students a wide choice for their future careers.

6) **Social integration** - People of many castes and religions live and work together in cities, which creates better understanding and harmony and helps breakdown social and cultural barriers.

7) **Improvements in economy** - High-tech industries and commercial units are largely concentrated or based in cities. Such units earn valuable foreign exchange and lot of money for a country in the stock markets.

4. **Some Solutions**

The surge in urban populations, fueled by migration, natural increase, increase in life expectancy and births is unstoppable. The first great wave of urbanisation unfurled over two centuries, from 1750 to 1950, in Europe and North America, with urban populations rising from 15 million to 423 million. The second wave is happening now in the developing world. There, the number of people living in urban areas will have grown from 309 million in 1950 to an expected 3.9 billion in 2030. As mentioned before, by 2030, developing nations are expected to have 80 per cent of the world’s urban population. If this population growth is helter-skelter, we can predict sprawling of slums and spread of negative social, economic and environmental trends in cities.

Cities are also engines of economic growth. Although cities concentrate poverty, they also represent the best hope of escaping it. Hence concrete efforts need to be put in so as to manage urbanisation trends as effectively as possible. Some possible solutions for the same are presented below:

1) **Planning for a viable public transport system** - Plans are required for a fixed transit, preferably rail, above and below ground. Subways along all major travel corridors; buses or trams on all secondary corridors need to be planned and developed. Fixed-rail transit helps to guide development and keep the streets busy. When development happens around fixed-transit, it is easy to get around on foot because everything is closer together. On the contrary, when transit isn’t fixed, as with a diesel bus route, or it is designed around the auto, transit becomes impractical because everything is further apart. New York is an example of a walking city that grew up around fixed transit. Dallas is an example of an auto city built up around roadways.

It is very convenient to get around without a car in a walking city built around fixed transit. This makes it so there are more people on the sidewalks, and businesses can
thrive from walking traffic, without the need for parking. Fixed-transit can be light-rail, a subway, or a bus that operates from overhead wires. A bus-way built for diesel buses is also fixed transit, but because the bus can leave the bus-way it doesn’t have the same positive impact on development and density as other forms of fixed transit. If your city doesn’t have fixed-transit, advocate for it. It will take a long time to change the way things are built, but a convenient walking district can spring up in little time when fixed transit and high density are established in an area.

Another possible solution is to build cycle tracks to encourage bicycle use. Most European countries have adopted this concept and have succeeded. Though such a plan is almost impossible at this stage in India due to huge congestion on roads in cities, steps could be taken to incorporate such measures in the future while planning new localities.

We must also keep in mind that one plan that works best in some country need not be suitable to Indian conditions.

2) **Mixed-use, mixed-income neighbourhoods** - Mixed-use neighborhoods solve many urban ills. By intermingling commercial, residential, and civic functions in the same neighbourhoods, you reduce dependence on automotive transport, since destination facilities are always close at hand: one can walk or hire affordable modes of transport (like cycle rikshaws) to the market, the salon, the library, the bar, school or university, administrative offices, and so on. This means denser development is possible without reducing living spaces (you reduce street pace, space dedicated to the automobile, instead); it also means more tax money for more amenities and social programmes, since streets don’t pay taxes and parking lots don’t pay much tax, but homes and businesses do. Yet, since there is less road infrastructure to build and maintain, and utility infrastructure is more efficiently configured (e.g. 100 feet of sewer pipe serving hundreds rather than tens of users), such neighbourhoods need less tax money to support their basic functions. This means one could then either lower taxes, or apply them to more desirable civic amenities, such as parks, squares, concerts, etc. More people walking also increases community feeling, reduces opportunity for crime (“eyes on the street”), and allows for more interaction among the citizenry. It increases ridership on public transit, making it more efficient.

Mixed-income neighbourhoods not only increase urban variety by mixing types and sizes of housing; they also increase the cohesiveness of a community. People from different walks of life come to meet and know each other, however superficially, and are thus less likely to make political or personal decisions based on stereotyped views. Rich, poor, and middle can discover common ground and not base their attitudes toward each other on envy, disdain, or spite. It’s a matter of hybrid vigor: purebred ideas, like purebred animals, tend to be delicate, weak, and subject to “genetic” infirmities. We learn not by congregating with those similar to us, but by meeting those who are different. You could say it’s the sexuality of the intellect: just as animals who exchange genes evolve into more efficient forms more rapidly than those primitive creatures that don’t, so do societies whose members exchange ideas, social concepts, personal philosophies, what have you — even just gossip.

3) **Buildings of different age, condition, and size** - Too often in the last half-century urban developers and city officials have approached revitalisation by assembling multiple parcels, bulldozing what existed, and building new. This happens in commercial and
residential areas. It is standards set by suburban development and a desire to compete with suburban development that leads to this practice. This will not, however, lead to a healthy city. Wherever you live, a walk around town is sure to show the liveliest areas are the places that have many small parcels with different owners, a mix of new and old buildings and some buildings that are in better shape than others. The mix of old and new buildings provides an interesting streetscape. Older buildings in poor condition provide the incubators for entrepreneurs to start businesses. The newer buildings provide locations for the more established merchants to set up shop and serve as drawing cards for a business district. The mix also serves to provide residential dwelling units of different size, condition and price making it so the neighbourhood is mixed economically and providing places for both the business owner and grocery clerk to live.

4) **Living spaces everywhere, especially near downtown** - Many contemporary cities have a concept pocketing separate areas for separate purposes. For instance, in many European cities that were rebuilt post World War II, there exist suburbs where there are two or sometimes even three separate pockets. One pocket/area is where people live, others where people shop and others where people work. This leads to people moving in mass at almost the same time during the day from one particular area to the other. This creates needless congestion, streets empty at some times and overcrowded at others. When the places people live are spread throughout the city, many will choose to live near where they work. Stores will locate where people live. Many small stores will serve to supplement or even replace larger stores. The downtown streets that become deserted after office hours in many cities will become busy later and later into the evening. Lively downtowns are downtowns that are filled with not only office buildings and shopping districts, they are filled with apartment buildings, condos and other places where people live.

5) **Large or small public parks and squares with natural green spaces as opposed to having no public squares or planting private manicured gardens with exotic species of plants** - In our cities we need to have public parks and squares where people are able to relax, meet and mingle as human beings. Unfortunately most such public spaces are now days replaced with either metal and concrete or privately owned (by individual or and commercial entity like a corporation) manicured gardens that are artificially decorated with non-native or exotic species. We need to have places where we interact with each other as people and not machines, whether we talk to one another or not, where we can pass among each other on our way to our daily chores, acknowledging our common humanity with a glance or a nod or a word; places where we can linger if we feel so inclined, where we can enjoy the day and partake of a feeling of community, a feeling that we’re all in this together, helping each other, tasting life together, creating the city. Public space: our space. Not some landlord’s or management company’s.

Public squares and public parks are also places for children to play and mingle with other kids of their age. These also substitute as thoroughfares for pedestrians. People crossing each others’ paths in a square may not speak to each other, but they know that they occupy common space.

6) **Encouraging equilibrium in in-migration and out-flow of population** - A city is more than just a collection of people. It is an incubator of ideas. Though certain stability is good for a city, but an influx and out box is even more important. This will bring together the widest array of ideas, interests and backgrounds. It is important for cities to attract
Challenges of Urban Societies

7) **Street trees and rooftop/kitchen gardens** - Planting trees within the cities and promoting green spaces is very essential for the health of a habitat. Street trees and kitchen gardens not only provide space for leisure to the people but also provide living space to animals and birds. Rooftop gardens provide better insulation than any amount of fiberglass batting and can grow food as well; trees provide shade in the summer and obligingly drop their leaves in the winter so sunlight can warm homes and offices, and their transpiration also helps balance local temperatures.

8) **Light rail or a rapid train connection to the airport; freight and passenger rail depots in town** - Making different forms of transportation work together will be a prime challenge in the 21st Century. There is no need for much of what exists around airports in the United States. The shopping areas, acres of parking lots and hotel accommodations at airports can be eliminated. Further, in the future, people will be able to begin their journey near their home and end it at their destination, without checking the baggage twice. To accomplish this, cities need to establish airport connections via light rail to downtown. This will allow passengers to leave their cars at home, or to get to the airport without the use of a car with the assurance they will be able to get to their destination without financing a cab ride or renting a car. Further, high-speed rail lines should be built to replace smaller airports and accommodate passengers travelling less than a few hundred miles. A track should be funded and operated by commercial airlines and establish train stations at airports. (In Europe, for example, Lufthansa provides rail as well as air service.) This will allow for seamless connections and transfers between trains and planes in order to complete a journey using a single ticket without hassle.

9) **Working farms adjacent to or (better yet) within city limits** - The farther food is grown from town, the more it costs and the worse it tastes. Local farming means less fuel and road use, which is good for the earth and reduces need for taxes to support road infrastructure and fuel subsidies. Shorter transport times means food can ripen longer on the branch, so it tastes better and is more nutritious. The necessity to fit farms into numerous smaller spaces in town means fewer big agribusiness operations making their money on economies of scale; instead you have a greater number of small producers, which would lead to more variety of food, more accommodation to local tastes, and more competition (thus better service and lower prices), as well as making commercial organic farming economically feasible. This would again reduce stress on the earth and help minimise dependence on petroleum. Urban farmers’ markets bear all this out, providing higher quality food than the supermarkets, yet charging less for it.

Also, the presence of farms provides green space for the citizens and reminds them that all, regardless of pretensions, are tied to the earth.

10) **Shops that open onto the sidewalk, not onto parking lots; underground or leveled automobile parking that does not consume ground space** - Shops that open onto the sidewalk encourage pedestrian traffic, and pedestrians are better able to window shop than drivers. Walking of course is exercise too, and people who are walking are more
likely to meet or make friends or other social, even commercial, contacts than drivers can. More pedestrian traffic therefore makes for a healthier and richer city. Shops set back behind vast parking lots foster the delusion that they are separate from the city and bear no responsibility to the community that supports them. They practically require driving, which increases civic infrastructure costs and increase social isolation. Sidewalk shops encourage friendly social contact and simply make life more pleasant.

Putting parking in mid-block structures or (better yet) underground accommodates those who must or prefer to drive without fragmenting the city to make room for vast parking lots.

5. Conclusion

How important are Urban reforms - Against the benefits of urbanisation, a major consequence of rural-urban migration is over-urbanisation. In other words, at some point, diseconomies of scale begin to emerge as cities become too big, although the city size at which these become important has not been demonstrated. Along with the rapid spread of urbanisation has come the prolific growth of huge slums and shanty towns.

Today, slum settlements represent over one-third of the urban population in all developing countries; in many cases they account for more than 60% of the urban total. The presence of enormous numbers of squatters and slum-dwellers accounting for half the populations of cities as diverse as Istanbul, Dar es Salaam and Caracas are a visible proof of this phenomenon.

As mentioned before, air pollution, congestion, social disturbances, crime and similar problems increase disproportionately with city size. The concentration of people also causes congestion and raises the cost of travel so that scarce resources like time and fuel are wasted. In addition, the mounting pressure on existing services means deteriorating quality and a reduction of what is available per person. As cities expand, the cost of providing basic services can rise enormously.

Over-urbanisation and its related problems (pollution, noise and congestion) are examples of negative externalities. The presence of such externalities causes a market to operate inefficiently. The market failure will lead to a free-market solution which tends towards over-urbanisation or to a size of city that is above the socially desirable one, because there is a clear divergence between private and social marginal costs (i.e. social costs = private costs + external costs).

Despite the huge social costs of rural-urban migration, people are still moving to overcrowded cities. This tendency can be understood as a response to large urban-rural wage differentials maintained by minimum wage laws and restrictive practices. Because of the externalities involved in migration decisions there is a good reason to suppose that unregulated markets will tend to promote over-urbanisation. As long as the private costs of migration are less than the social costs and migrants are willing to risk not finding a high-wage job, over-urbanisation is likely to continue to be a serious problem for developing countries.

6. References and Recommended Readings


UNIT 3
URBANISATION IN GLOBALISING 21st CENTURY: RECENT TRENDS

1. Introduction

Urbanisation is a major phenomenon of contemporary world, an indicator of globalisation. Although uncertainty prevails about future trends, urbanisation is an essential but often neglected component of the demographic transition and of development at large.

The urban transition occurs at different times and with diverse growth patterns. The real challenge remains for governments to take actions that allow urban residents to make the most of living in cities. Already half the world’s population is urban. Currently, the less urbanised regions are Asia and Africa, but they are expected to reach their respective tipping points — that is when their populations are more urban than rural — in 2023 and 2030.

According to the Report of UN-HABITAT\(^1\), from 2025 to 2030, average annual global urban growth is expected at 1.5%. This signifies that by the middle of the century (2050) urban populations are due to reach 61.8%. In analysing global trends, the report argues that the degree of a country’s urbanisation is now an indicator of wealth.

The more urbanised a country, the higher the individual incomes. However, the authors of UN-HABITAT Report find that the reverse is true for countries ravaged by civil war. In Liberia, for example, individual incomes declined as rural populations fled to towns in search of safety.

Extreme inequalities, inadequate or ineffective policies can also block development or, at least, set back progress substantially. Recent studies by various agencies show a positive link between economic development and urbanisation. According to UN-HABITAT Report, this trend is mentioned for African countries. As per the report, in Asia it is clear that urbanisation is the major factor behind economic growth, contributing to an overall reduction in poverty rates. In Latin America, however, economic development and urbanisation have been linked through industrialisation and modernisation yet the result has been high degrees of inequality between and within countries.

Whether there is any economic development or not, it is indeed true that globally the number of cities with 10 million or more inhabitants is increasing rapidly, and most of the new mega-cities are in the less-developed regions. In 1960, only New York and Tokyo had more than

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\(^1\) UN-HABITAT State of World’s Cities 2010/2011: Cities for All; Bridging the Urban Divide
10 million people. By 1999, there were 17 cities of more than 10 million people around the world, 13 of these were in less-developed regions. It is projected that there will be 26 megacities by 2015, 22 in less-developed regions (18 will be in Asia); more than 10% of the world’s population will live in these cities, up from just 1.7% in megacities in 1950.

These enormous figures themselves are not final and are mostly under-numbered. The reason for this lies in the fact that internal migrations (migrations within the country) are still under-documented and under-studied, in spite of their role in urbanisation and population history, of their high number and of their socio-economic relevance for households and communities as well as for regions and countries. Internal migration is now recognised as an important factor in influencing social and economic development, especially in developing countries.

As we know by now, urbanisation is the process by which there is an increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas. Some common indices used to define towns are:

- Population size
- Population density
- Function
- Level of administration

The UN does not specify any classification of settlements as towns/rural areas. It has instead chosen to classify them by size.

2. Trends in Urbanisation : Global

Urbanisation has been a cultural as well as demographic process. The beginning of modern urbanisation can be traced back to Renaissance times in 16th century. Turkish assaults resulted in movement of Christians from the east to western European countries. As a result, trade grew and European cities along the coasts developed greatly.

A further boost for urbanisation trend was created with the arrival of the “Industrial Revolution”. Populations of cities in Europe and USA started to increase significantly in the 18th and 19th centuries. However, urbanisation started in Asia only in the first half of the 20th century and in the second half of the 20th century in Africa, when the countries obtained independence from colonial rule. An example for a dramatic increase in extent and population of cities is Chicago in USA. The population increased from 15 people to about 20 million, within a span of 78 years.

Urban history, to a large degree, is the history of civilisation. The earliest towns were around the Mediterranean Sea in the west, Babylon and Mesopotamia; as well Harrappa or Indus valley civilisations in India. Varanasi and Madurai, both located in India are two of the oldest living cities in the world.

Before the industrial revolution, most towns were small and mainly commercial centers and seaports. After the industrial revolution, cities grew very rapidly. By 1850, there were 2 “million cities”(cities with a population exceeding one million)— London and Paris. The growth of towns experienced a population explosion in the 1950s. By 1990, there were 286 “million cities”.
For the move from small rural communities to towns and cities to occur, a whole series of problems had to be solved. To feed a large community it was necessary to develop a method of preserving large amounts of food and storing seeds. The higher concentration of people exacerbated disease and better systems of public works and sanitation had to be devised. Cities became the repositories of humanity’s collective intelligence, libraries were created to store this record of knowledge. Banks were built to store the accumulated wealth, while armories and stronger fortification were constructed to defend the cities against pirates and looters.

History has produced many cities that have risen and then collapsed as a result of changes in the environment or in trade routes or because of epidemics, war or other issues. Machu Picchu, Tikal, Petra and Angkor rose to greatness and then disappeared into the jungle or into the sand. Plagues such as the Black Death in the Middle Ages mostly killed the urban population. Rural people were relatively unaffected. But if a plague was to attack today it would find a different demographic distribution of people: huge numbers of people concentrated in mega-cities sharing the same air-conditioned air may be wiped out easily.

In 1950, 83% of the population of developing countries were rural inhabitants. By 1973 this had declined to 75% and by 1993 to only 60%. The number of African cities grew from 2 to 37 between 1950 and 1993. In Cairo the population was 5.4 million in 1970. By 1993 it had increased to 15 million, creating a massive increase in slums. African cities double in size every 12 years. Some of Africa’s cities are growing by 10% a year, the fastest rate of urbanisation ever recorded. For the first time in history, more people live in cities than in the rural areas.

Explosive population growth, coupled with migration from the countryside, has created 25 mega-cities with populations of 10 million or more. Of these, 18 are in developing countries, including some of the poorest in the world. Mexico City has over 20 million people and Kolkata (Howrah) has 12 million.

According to the United Nations Population Fund Report, the movement of people towards cities has accelerated in the past 40 years, particularly in the less-developed regions. The world’s urban population is now growing by 60 million persons per year, about three times the increase in the rural population.

Increasing urbanisation results about equally from births in urban areas and from the continued movement of people from the rural surround. These forces are also feeding the sprawl of urban areas as formerly rural peri-urban settlements become incorporated into nearby cities and as secondary cities, linked by commerce to larger urban centers, grow larger.

The proportion of people in developing countries who live in cities has almost doubled since 1960 (from less than 22% to more than 40%), while in more-developed regions the urban share has grown from 61% to 76%. There is a significant association between this population movement from rural to urban areas and declines in average family size.

Asia and Africa remain the least urbanised of the developing regions (less than 38% each). Latin America and the Caribbean is more than 75% urban, a level almost equal to those in Europe, Northern America and Japan (all are between 75 and 79%).

Urbanisation is projected to continue well into the next century. By 2030, it is expected that nearly 5 billion (61%) of the world’s 8.1 billion people will live in cities. The less-developed regions will be more than 57% urban. Latin America and the Caribbean will actually have a greater per centage of inhabitants living in cities than Europe will.
Globally, the number of cities with 10 million or more inhabitants is increasing rapidly, and most of these new ‘megacities’ are in the less-developed regions. In 1960, only New York and Tokyo had more than 10 million people. By 1999, there were 17 cities of more than 10 million people around the world, 13 of these were in less-developed regions. It is projected that there will be 26 megacities by 2015, 22 in less-developed regions (18 will be in Asia); more than 10% of the world’s population will live in these cities, up from just 1.7% in megacities in 1950.

**Urbanisation in the World Today**

Today as compared to Asian, South American and African countries, countries such as USA and UK have a higher urbanisation level. However, the rate of urbanisation in countries of Asia, Africa and South America is far greater than that in UK or USA.

Economic forces helped to locate factories and workers in cities. In USA 5% of the population lived in cities in 1800. By 1920 50% of the population lived in cities. In comparison only 17.8% of population of developing nations lived in cities in 1950. But by 2000, the per centage had increased to 40%. By 2030, the per centage is predicted to increase to 60%. Australia is the most urbanised country in the world. Both the rate and level of urbanisation in Australia are high right now. However, in the future, this rate is predicted to become stagnant and the process of counter-urbanisation will follow².

**Table 1: Rate of increase in urbanisation in the World - A comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Developed Countries</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Countries</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² All figures from UN-HABITAT Report “State of the World’s Cities 2010/2011: Cities for All; Bridging the Urban Divide”.
Urban Trends

1) Defining ‘Urban’ - Every nation in the world has a different definition of what constitutes urban. There is no consensus with respect to a universal definition. However, every jurisdictional authority around the world uses one of the four definitions:

   a) A definition based on administrative criteria. It classifies urban area based on administrative or geographic zones (e.g., Brazil)

   b) A definition based on both administrative and population density (demographic) criteria. (e.g., China)

   c) A definition based on size and city population (e.g., United States)

   d) A definition based on combination of size and economic nature of area (e.g., Japan)

India uses a combination of population, density and employment thresholds. Urban area in India is classified as an area with a population more than 5,000, a density exceeding more than 400 persons per square kilometer and if more than 75% of its male workers are in non-agricultural profession. Of course, the State governments have the flexibility to declare an area urban, based on their own State rules.

2) Rapid Urbanisation in Developing Countries - For the first time in history, the majority of people live now in urban areas. The proportion of the world’s population which is urban has been growing rapidly and a larger fraction of the total population lives within cities now that at any previous period in history. Over the past two or three decades this urbanisation trend has been fastest in developing countries and, as a broad generalisation, the faster the rate of economic growth, the more rapid has been the trend towards urbanisation of population.

3) Measuring Urban Development on the basis of Economic Activity - Defining what is urban has been a difficult task and there is no commonly agreed definition. Each country defines the term urban in its own way and they can refer to cities, towns, villages, conurbations or localities. There are a number of approaches in which criteria are based to determine what an urban area is. An economic approach would be based on administrative units and would define urban areas using a threshold for labour force (economically active population rates) in agriculture (United Nations, 1974). A geographic approach would consider that density is the main indicator of urbanity. In general, this kind of analysis takes population or houses in a territory (not necessary an administrative unit) as a unit of analysis. Unless definitions of ‘urban’ are comparable, international comparisons of levels or rates of urbanisation can be difficult. For instance, using data from the 1991 Census of Population and the only then valid administrative definition of London — the City of London — London’s population was 4.5 million, but if London was defined as the statistical unit used as a ‘region’ by Eurostat — Greater London — then its population was 6.89 million. In the same vein, the population of the administrative city of Paris—City of Paris de Paris — at the same date was 2.152 million. Was Paris the bigger or smaller city? If both were defined in terms of functional criteria — their ‘economic spheres of influence’, then London’s population in 1991 was 12.5 million compared to Paris with 11.4 million.

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3 United Nations, 2007, Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Census
As discussed in previous units, there are three major different criteria whereby cities can be defined:

a) **Administrative ‘competence’** - is the place classified as a city for administrative purposes

b) **Physical indicators** - the density of buildings, of people or of other indicators such as the proportion of any unit of area covered by hard surfaces (such as concrete or asphalt) or the intensity of night light emissions.

c) **Functional definitions** relating to the behaviour of households and firms to reveal the boundaries of what is ‘urban’ territory.

Each of these methods of urban definition has strengths and weaknesses. However, none of these methods are accepted uniformly or globally. Though the most obvious universal description of what is urban should ideally be based on administrative definition. The advantage of using administrative definitions of ‘city’ is that it is easy — both in terms of gathering statistics and politically, the fact that policy and funding for data gathering is ultimately dependent on governments should not be ignored. A further implication of this is that if the interest is in urban policy, the administrative units are frequently those for which policy is implemented. The most obvious disadvantage of using administrative and political boundaries is that they are often arbitrary and reflect often ancient patterns of life. The basis on which they are defined and the frequency with which they are redefined vary widely, not only between, but also within countries.

Hence, it is understood that degree of urbanisation should be measured not by administrative, physical or functional definitions but by their economic character. If the basic nature of economy of the region is primarily commercial and non-agrarian, it is more often than not characterised as an urban area.

4) **Demographic Change and Increased Migration to Urban Areas** - Throughout much of the nineteenth century, the premier city of the world, in terms of its population, was London. It was the first to reach the magic figure of one million, a population not attained by Paris until the mid-nineteenth century, New York until 1871, Berlin until 1880, and Vienna until 1885. (Jones, 1988: 97). Outside Europe the largest cities were Tokyo and Beijing. Today, the distribution of the world’s largest cites is markedly different. London, despite its population of 7.7 million in 1980 was only the sixteenth largest urban agglomeration, behind modern giants such as Tokyo (16.9 million), Shanghai (11.7 million) and Calcutta (9.0 million).

In 1990, London did not even make the world’s ‘top twenty’. In 2000, the top twenty group included only three cities from the First World: Tokyo (19.0 million), New York (16.8 million) and Los Angeles (13.9 million).

Urban growth is fuelled in two principal ways: by demographic change and by migration. Demographic trends are well-known: declining mortality rates in most developing countries have not been matched by a corresponding decline in fertility. Rural areas often cannot accommodate the increasing population and many, especially young single people, migrate to urban areas in the hope of work, housing and an income, part of which may be intended as support for family members left behind in the rural areas. Young migrants, in turn, will form their own families in their new urban location, further increasing the urban population.
5) **Interdependence of Urban and Rural Populations** - Rapid urbanisation, the concentration of the urban population in large cities, the sprawl of cities into wider geographical areas and the rapid growth of mega-cities are among the most significant transformations of human settlements. Urban areas strongly influence the world of the twenty-first century, and urban and rural populations are increasingly interdependent for their economic, environmental and social well being. Among the economic and social factors influencing this process are population growth and voluntary and involuntary migration, real and perceived employment opportunities, cultural expectations, changing consumption and production patterns and disparities among regions.

It is a general trend that rural areas in many parts of the world have lagged economically relative to urban centers. The relative vitality of urban centers has led some to suggest that rural areas and rural policy ought to pursue a strategy of strengthening rural-urban economic linkages. Better understanding of the linkages between rural and urban economies would aid policymakers in addressing interrelated problems such as declining economic opportunity in rural regions that is often combined with losses in quality of life in urban areas experiencing high rates of population growth. Rural and urban legislators, for example, might better understand how the economic fortunes of rural and urban areas are interrelated and how certain policy proposals directed to the rural economy have feedback effects on the urban economy.

6) **Positive Steps in Urban Governance** - Managing urban growth has become one of the most important challenges of the 21st Century. At the same time, the concept of urban governance has itself undergone a major transformation over the last decade and a half. Governance of cities throughout the developing world has been affected by movements towards democratisation and political pluralism, an emphasis on decentralisation, and the rise of civil society. Numerous legal and institutional reforms in many countries have given shape to institutional reforms at the local and municipal levels. Consequently,
solutions to urban problems are increasingly being ought at the local rather than the state or national level. These trends underscore the urgent need to build and support the capacity of local governments to manage the environmental and social service problems that accompany rapid urban growth.

Urbanisation is set to stay for a long time. It may slow but surely does not show any signs of stopping. The main goal of urban planning is to make all amenities and comforts available to the public without imposing many negative effects on society and environment, aptly referred to as “Sustainable growth”. The cardinal rule is to plan cities beforehand, rather than let them grow spontaneously and haphazardly. During city planning it should be ensured that adequate infrastructure is available to support the population. Residences should be conveniently located near the civic bodies. This could improve effective provision of the necessary services. Opportunities can be created within rural areas to reduce stress on cities. This also results in a higher standard of living for the people of the country as a whole.

Some of the villages in South Kannada district of Karnataka set a good example for this. They have efficient transport and communication system and electricity. Co-operatives have been set up to provide financial aid to peasants. The rural people have been encouraged to engage in cottage industries and commercial activities such as making pickles, handicrafts, sweets and savories. Through cooperative agencies, marketing of these goods also has become easy. This is an efficient method of making rural areas self-sufficient and curbing migration trends by creating opportunities for people in villages.

Currently, planning cities for sustainable growth, mainly in the developing countries, is a major challenge for humanity. Restricting the population boom is another major issue. All these vital factors would decide what the future would look like for humankind and our planet. Although it is impossible to restrict urbanisation it can be ensured that the road of the development can move in the right path.

3. **Trends in Urbanisation: Indian**

India is fast becoming one of the world’s largest urban nations today. It has over 600 million urban citizens, a figure that is projected to reach 900 million by 2050.

The genesis of the hierarchy of urban settlements and spatial structure in contemporary India can be traced to the development dynamics during the colonial period, essentially in response to the requirements of an imperialist regime. The colonial economy, through the establishment of few port and administrative towns, generated strong centrifugal pulls manifested in commodity and population flows towards them. This had the inevitable consequence of weakening the centripetal forces exerted by the inter-settlement linkages. The four urban agglomerations (UAs), namely, Calcutta (now Kolkata), Madras (now Chennai), Bombay (now Mumbai) and Karachi (presently in Pakistan) served, un-like their Western counterparts in the medieval period, as focal points of a mechanism for generating economic surplus. The pre-existing rural-urban interactions were gradually replaced by export-import oriented commodity flows. Movement of population that became necessary to sustain the new urban centers (and the plantation fields) further disrupted the core-periphery relationship and strengthened the centrifugal forces. These cities, unlike their counterpart in the developed countries of the world, were not a product of economic development.
Unlike many countries that are grappling with aging populations and raising dependency ratios, India has a young and rapidly growing population. It is estimated that in the next two decades, more than 180 million job seekers will enter India’s workforce — a potential demographic dividend. What India needs is thriving cities capable of fully utilising this potential to the optimum.

**Some Facts**

1) In India, Towns are described as places with municipal corporation, municipal area committee, town committee, notified area committee or cantonment board; also, all places having 5,000 or more inhabitants, a density of not less than 1,000 persons per square mile or 400 per square kilometre, pronounced urban characteristics and at least three fourths of the adult male population employed in pursuits other than agriculture.

2) Among all the States and Union territories, the National Capital Territory of Delhi is most urbanised with 93 per cent urban population followed by Union territory of Chandigarh (89.8 per cent) and Pondicherry (66.6 per cent).

3) Among the major States, Tamil Nadu is the most urbanised state with 43.9 per cent of the population living in urban areas followed by Maharashtra (42.4 per cent) and Gujarat (37.4 per cent). The proportion of urban population is the lowest in Himachal Pradesh with 9.8% followed by Bihar with 10.5 per cent, Assam (12.7 per cent) and Orissa (14.9 per cent).

4) In terms of absolute number of persons living in urban areas, Maharashtra leads with 41 million persons which is 14 per cent of the total population of the country. Uttar Pradesh accounts for about 35 million followed by Tamil Nadu 27 million.

5) In terms of absolute number of persons living in urban areas, Maharashtra leads with 41 million persons which is 14 per cent of the total population of the country. Uttar Pradesh accounts for about 35 million followed by Tamil Nadu 27 million.

6) The below tables lay down the urban agglomeration and population details as per the provisional statistics available for the 2001 Census of India.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Population Size</th>
<th>No.of UAs/Towns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class I</td>
<td>1,00,000 and above</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II</td>
<td>50,000 - 99,999</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III</td>
<td>20,000 - 49,999</td>
<td>1,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IV</td>
<td>10,000 - 19,999</td>
<td>1,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class V</td>
<td>5,000 - 9,999</td>
<td>888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class VI</td>
<td>Less than 5,000</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All classes</td>
<td></td>
<td>4378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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All the figures have been extracted from Census of India - 2001.
### Table 3: Cities having million (+) Population in 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Urban Agglomeration/City</th>
<th>Population (Lakhs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Greater Mumbai</td>
<td>163.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kolkata</td>
<td>132.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>127.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chennai</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pune</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Surat</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kanpur</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jaipur</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lucknow</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Patna</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Indore</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Vadodara</td>
<td>14.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Bhopal</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ludhiana</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Kochi</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Visakhapatnam</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Agra</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Varanasi</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Madurai</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Meerut</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Nashik</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Jabalpur</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Jamshedpur</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Asansol</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Dhanbad</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Faridabad</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Allahabad</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Amritsar</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Vijaywada</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Rajkot</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**: 1078.8
Challenges faced by urban Indian policy makers

What India lacks is effective policies to manage its rapid and large-scale urbanisation. Such a shortcoming could jeopardise the nation’s growth trajectory. If India, however, pursues a new operating model for its cities, it could add as much as 1 to 1.5 per cent to annual GDP growth, bringing the economy near to the double-digit growth to which the government aspires.

Large sections of planners and policy makers in the country have argued that there exists no serious problem of infrastructural deficiency that can not be tackled through management solutions. All that is needed is to restructure the system of governance, legal and administrative framework in a manner that the standard reform measures can be implemented. Reduction of public sector intervention, ensuring appropriate prices for infrastructure and civic amenities through elimination or reduction of subsidies, development of capital market for resource mobilisation, facilitating private and joint sector projects, simplification of legislative system to bring about appropriate land use changes and location of economic activities etc. are being advocated as the remedial package.

The public sector and other para-statal agencies that had been assigned the responsibility of producing and distributing infrastructural facilities have come in for sharp criticism on grounds of inefficiency, lack of cost effectiveness, resulting in continued dependence on grants for sustenance. Some kind of “financial discipline” has already been imposed by the government and Reserve Bank of India, forcing these agencies to generate resources internally and borrow from development cum banking institutions, and, in a few cases, from capital market at a fairly high interest rate. This has restricted their areas of functioning and, what is more important changed the thrust of activities.

Solutions are being found also in terms of their efficient, transparent and decentralised management of the facilities. With the passing of the 74th Amendment to Indian Constitution and corresponding legislations, amendments, ordinances etc. at the state level, decentralisation has become the keyword in governance. The vacuum created by the limited withdrawal of the state in the provision of infrastructure is sought to be filled up also through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs), besides the local authorities.

The enthusiasm for the above package of “management solutions”, both among the international as also national organisations, is responsible for the issues concerning their impact on settlement structure and access of the poor to the infrastructural amenities not receiving adequate attention among researchers. However, given the disparity in economic strength of the towns and cities and their unequal access to capital market and public institutions, this perspective would enable the larger cities to corner much of the advantage from the system. Also, large sections of urban poor are likely to be priced out of the formal systems of service delivery. A few researchers have pointed out that the indifference on the part of policy makers on these issues would institutionalise inequality in infrastructural facilities and accentuate disparity in the levels of economic development.

In the wake of the strategy of economic liberalisation and the changes in urban governance as a consequence of the 74th Constitutional Amendment, there has been a shift from budgetary support to institutional finance for urban infrastructure development. There exist new arrangements for mobilising resources, such as assigning contracts to private agencies for
providing infrastructural services (eg public-private partnerships in DMRC project). Furthermore, some infrastructure development/improvement projects being implemented by NGOs and local communities within a participatory framework. It is also estimated that new public-private partnership scenarios of infrastructure financing are likely to emerge in the next couple of decades that would have a tremendous positive impact on the deficiency of amenities across states and size classes.

The biggest strength of India lies in the fact that India's urban policies are not be anti-rural. Indian cities and its villages are interdependent and symbiotic. This feature is very rare in other economies of the world. India’s cities are home to more than 340 million people, representing every section of India’s society. On the face of it, we may term it as Urban sprawl but in reality, the population today in Indian cities is a microcosm of the nation as a whole — having a rich mix of communities, cultures, professions and income classes, from having most deprived sections to middle class to most affluent section, within the same demographic area.

4. Counter-Urbanisation

Until the mid-1990s Britain’s wildlife habitats were being destroyed for housing and more roads at a rate of 200 to 300 sites a year. The same is true for Australia. Over the past 40,000 years Australia has been home to about 1200 generations. The past five generations however, have changed the face of Australia more dramatically than all preceding generations combined. Although Australia is a vast continent, approximately 70% of Australians live in cities.

Urbanisation usually occurs when people move from villages to cities to settle, in hope of a higher standard of living. This usually takes place in developing countries. In rural areas, people become victims of unpredictable weather conditions such as drought and floods, which can adversely affect their livelihood. Consequently many farmers move to cities in search of a better life. This can be seen in Karnataka as well where farmers from Raichur, Gulbarga districts which are drought-stricken areas, migrate to Bangalore to escape poverty.

Cities in contrast, offer opportunities of high living and are known to be places where wealth and money are centralised. Most industries and educational institutions are located in cities whereas there are limited opportunities within rural areas. This further contributes to migration to cities.

Urbanisation brings with it several consequences — both adverse and beneficial. They impact on social and environmental areas. One of the adverse effects of urbanisation is that there is increasing competition for facilities due to the high standard of living in urban areas, which has triggered several negative effects. Many people including farmers who move to cities in search of a better life end up as casual labourers as they lack adequate education. This leads to one of the worst problems of urbanisation — the growth of slums. Slums are urban areas that are heavily populated with substandard housing and very poor living conditions. As a result several problems arise such as land insecurity, poor living conditions, unemployment, crime, etc. This results in a reverse process to urbanisation where people start moving out of the cities. This process is known as Counter-urbanisation.

Counter urbanisation is a demographic and social process whereby people move from urban areas to rural areas. It first took place as a reaction to inner-city deprivation and overcrowding. It is the movement of population and economic activity away from urban areas.
As discussed before, many factors can come into account when one decides to move from an urban area to a rural area including housing density, housing prices, pollution levels (health afflictions), crime levels, decision of peaceful retirement, and a wish to improve quality of life. Developments in rural electrification and rural communication networks such as telephone, television, newspapers and internet bring to rural areas some of the amenities of urbanity; thus eliminating one of the obstacles preventing some people from moving to a more rural setting.

The push factors of cities include: high land values, restricted sites for all types of development, high local taxes, congestion, and pollution. There are four main reasons for counter-urbanisation:

1) The increase in car ownership over the last 40 years means people are more mobile. This has led to an increase of will and ability to commute. Also, the growth in information technology (E-mail, faxes and video conferencing) means more people can work from home.

2) Urban areas are becoming increasingly unpleasant places to live due to pollution, crime and traffic congestion.

3) More people tend to move when they retire.

4) New business/techno parks on the edge of cities mean people no longer have to travel to the city centre. People now prefer to live on the outskirts of the city to be near where they work.

The pull factors offered by small towns are just the reverse of push factors present in cities: cheap, available land, clean, quiet surroundings, and high amenity. Improvements in transport and communications have also lessened the attractiveness of urban centers, and commuters are often willing to trade off increased travel times for improved amenity.

Dozens of developing countries are still industrialising. Due to corruption, poor legislation and lax policing of the legislation in these countries, pollution is many times higher than is considered safe for human health. In the United States, Britain and many other Western countries between 1985 and 1990 there was massive growth in out-of-town shopping centers. Until 1985 most people did their shopping close to their place of residence at small grocery stores. With the growth of large out-of-town shopping centers, towns-based commerce was decimated and car travel increased. Scenarios like this have only promoted the process of counter-urbanisation.

**Commercial Counter-urbanisation** - Much has been written about the residential patterns of counter-urbanisation, but the associated growth of rural business has attracted less attention. The most successful and sustainable model of counter-urbanisation is undoubtedly commercial counter-urbanisation. It is the growth of rural economies stimulated by inward migration. It is more than just a spatial decentralisation of business activity. There are numerous sustainable social as well as the economic motivations of ‘counter-urbanising’ business owners.

Commercial counter-urbanisation can be a two-stage process, as the decision to work in a rural area or run a rural business may occur several years after a residential move. Where this time lag exists, in-migrant business owners will be influenced by different factors in
different locations. In the context of neo-endogenous development, the balance of local and extra-local forces is particularly significant. This leads to the conclusion that in-migrant business owners need to become embedded into the rural community for the wider rural economy to realise the maximum benefits from commercial counter-urbanisation.

5. Environmental Challenges in Urban Society: Local vs. Global

Along with the many social and economic benefits of urbanisation comes a plethora of environmental ills, some of staggering proportion. Cities span less than three per cent of the world’s land area, but the intense concentration of population, industry and energy use can lead to severe local pollution and environmental degradation. Furthermore, a city’s ecological footprint extends far beyond its urban boundaries to the forests, croplands, coal mines and watersheds that sustain its inhabitants.

In the cities of the developing world, where population growth has outpaced the ability to provide vital infrastructure and services, the worst environmental problems are experienced close to home, with severe economic and social impacts for urban residents. Inadequate household water supplies, waste accumulation, and unsanitary conditions exact an enormous toll on the world’s one billion slum dwellers in terms of unnecessary death and disease. Developing country cities also experience the world’s worst urban air pollution as a result of rapid industrialisation and increased motorised transport. Worldwide, urban air pollution is estimated to cause one million premature deaths each year and cost two per cent of GDP in developed countries and five per cent in developing countries.

While cities in wealthier countries have already adopted policies and technologies to rectify many of their local environmental problems, the damage by such so called developed countries has already been done. Though now there is a growing realisation that human activities in urban areas can have significant impacts on a global level as well. In fact, the world’s cities account for 75 per cent of global energy consumption, 80 per cent of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and a disproportionate share of resource use, such as food, timber, and steel⁵.

City dwellers in developed countries, characterised by some of the highest per capita levels of consumption in the world, are largely responsible for these environmentally damaging trends. While an American city with a population of 650,000 requires approximately 30,000 square kilometers of land to service its needs, a similar sized but less affluent city in India requires only 2,800 square kilometers. Similarly, urban residents in the developed world generate up to six times more waste than those in developing countries.

As developing countries are becoming wealthier and more urban, bringing their consumption levels closer to those of the developed world, they are also fast becoming significant contributors to the global problems of resource depletion and climate change. Their adverse contributions cannot be curbed beyond a specific level as they need to urbanise and develop for their economic growth. The real need is to make cities more efficient and less polluting rather than curbing urbanisation trends.

⁵ UNHABITAT Report, State of World’s 2007/2008
6. References and Recommended Readings


