

# Urbanization: A developmental Challenge for the third World Countries (With special reference to Assam)

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## *Abstract:*

*Presently urbanization is a worldwide phenomenon. Each and every person or place is directly or indirectly involved in the continuing process of urbanization which is transforming the world rapidly. The rapid and dramatic growth of urbanization in the third world countries tells that the third world countries are passing through an "Urban revolution." But an uneven urban development is seen in the different countries and region of the globe. Urbanization is the most powerful socio economic component of modernization. A dichotomy is found between the modern urban civilization of the west and the ancient traditional is also called as metropolitan civilization based on multi-national commercial development. Systematic development of the fast growing urban centres and planning programme for creation of job opportunities should be started by the government with a goal of sustainable urban development.*

*Key words: urbanization, third-world countries, development, migration.*

## Introduction:

Presently urbanization is a worldwide phenomenon. Each and every person or place is directly or indirectly involved in the continuing process of urbanization which is transforming the world rapidly. Urbanization refers to the process by which a section of people change from the way of agricultural operations in secondary and tertiary sectors. Historically most of the first ancient towns (e.g. 6<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. towns and cities in Asia) were found in areas which now come under third world countries but surprisingly, today these areas are least urbanized in the world. (Mandal R.B., 1998). The cities of the third world countries are growing rapidly than the growth of urban population in comparison to European growth of urbanization.

Jones (1975) tells us that urbanization was more remarkable in developed countries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which for the third world countries it is in the 20<sup>th</sup> century whereby cities are growing at annual rate of 5 to 8 % and urban population doubling in every 10 to 15 years. P. Mack (1982) remarked when he observed the encouraging Trend of urbanization: If this trend continues at its present rate, more than a quarter of the world's population will be living in the cities of 10,000 pm make by A.D. 2000 and more than half by the year 2050. If the present rate of urbanization continues until the year 2050 more than 90% of the world's population will live in cities of 20,000 or more. The world is passing through an urban Revolution for establishing the "world City" as observed by Toynebee.

Urbanization phase in the Indus Valley was firstly associated with the Harappa Civilization dating back to 2350 B.C. The cities of civilization flourished over a period more than 600 years up to about 1700 B.C. and this was following by a prolonged period of over a thousand years in which we have no evidence of urban development from around 600 B.C., we again come across town and cities associated with the two major, but closely related, cultural streams of India, namely the Aryan civilization of the north and the Dravidian civilization of the south. From this period onwards, for about 2500 years, India had a more or less continuous history of urbanization. From historical evidences it is clear that there were both periods of urban growth and urban falls. Cities were great in number and in size during Mauryan and Post-Mauryan periods (from 300 BC to A.D. 600), both in northern India as well as in the extreme south. Cities were neglected during the Post- Gupta period was continued from A.D. 600 to A.D. 1000 in northern India. In southern India urbanization attained a zenith during the period A.D. 800 to A.D. 1200. Urbanization on a subdued seal flourished in northern India under the influence of Muslim rulers. Who came to India from Afghanistan and beyond from around A.D. 1200 and attained a second climax during the Mughal period, when many of India's cities were established (Ramachandran. R. 2008, Urbanization and urban systems in India)

The British came to India at a time when India was perhaps the most urbanized nation in the world, and the early part of the British rule saw a decline in the level of Indian urbanization. The causative factors behind urbanization varied from time to time leading to not one but several urbanization processes at different points in time. In the prehistoric period, urbanization was synonymous with the original and rise of civilization itself, thus

manifesting itself essentially a cultural process. In the historical periods, from ancient times to the British period urbanization was inextricably related to the rise and fall of Kingdom, dynastic and empires, and thus in effect urbanization during this period was essentially a political process. In recent times urbanization has been associated with industrialization and economic development.

#### Objectives:

- i) To study the growing trend of urbanization in the state of Assam, the North-East India or the whole country.
- ii) To study the relationship between economic development, particularly industrial development and urbanization.
- iii) To study the rural urban migration and the changing pattern of workforce depicted in different census report, the group discussions and observed facts along with its consequences.
- iv) To study the growing interest of people for the development of urban areas as urbanization is the essential precondition of development and to draw out some common problems inherent to the urban areas along with some suggestive measures based on the gravity of the problems from the observed facts, group discussion and the researched facts.

#### Urbanization in India:

Many well-known cities of prehistoric and historic times exist today in the form of small mounds or ruins. This is true of such great cities as Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Nalanda, Taxashila and Vijayanagar. Some others were Pataliputra, Madurai, Kanchupuram, Varanasi, Delhi etc. In some cities the old structures and street layouts are still in evidence. The present urban landscape of India is replete with cities having their origins at various points in the historical Past, Nasik, Jaipur, Moradabad, Kanpur and Shimla, for example, testify to their widely different socio-cultural origins. The emergence of industrial cities such as Bokaro, Bhilai and Rourkela, has added another dimension to the already variegated nature of Indian urbanization. For convenience the rise and fall of urban development in India can be divided in to the following periods distinctly.

- The Prehistoric period – 2350 BC to 1800 BC.
- The early historical period – 600 B.C. to A.D. 500,
- The Medieval period A.D. 600 to 1800 (It includes the Mughal period A.D. 1526-1800)
- The British period – A.D. 1800 to 1947.
- The Post – Independence Period up to date.

The overall impact of the British rule on the Indian urban development was noteworthy. In 1941, the last census during British rule there were 49 one-lakh population cities and in all around 2,500 towns. The major contribution of the British rule to urban development of India can be mentioned as:

(A) The creation of the three metropolitan post cities, which emerged as the leading Colonial cities of the world namely Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

(B) Creation of a chain of hill stations in Himalayan foot hills and South India, and introduction of tea and coffee plantation which produced a number of small settlements with urban characters in Assam and elsewhere by 1870 there were about 80 hill stations in four different areas of India. These areas are:

- i) Simla-Mussorie-Namilal near Delhi,
- ii) Darjeeling – Shillong near Calcutta.
- iii) Mahabaleshwar in the western Ghat near Bomby, and
- iv) The Nilgiri – Kadaikanal area in Tamil Nadu.

(C) Civil lines and cantonments: The civil lines were new addition to all but the smallest administrative centre and cantonments were most often built near major towns for security purposes.

(D) Railways, Industrialization and urbanization: The Rail was helped to at enlarge trade and commerce of modern industry and helped the process of urbanization.

(E) Urban amenities and urban administration: Cities amenities were increased and developed in urban lighting, domestic electricity supply, sewerage, modern shopping areas,

parks and playgrounds for recreation and playing were established in number of city areas during the British rule.( Ramachandran. R. 2010- Urbanization and urban systems in India)

Such types of facilities were generated by the Britishers for development of urbanization. During the 150 years of British rule (1800-1947) India's urban landscape went through a radical transformation. (Ramachandran R. 2010)

There are in fact not one but several processes of urbanization at work at any given point in time and space. These processes are interdependent and inter-related, yet varied in terms of their underlying causes and manifestations of their impact. The history of urbanization in India reveals, broadly 4 processes of urbanization at work throughout the historical period. These are:

(a) The emergence of new social relationships among the people in cities and between people in cities and those in village through a process of social change.

(b) The rise and fall of cities with changes in political order,

(c) The growth of cities based on new productive processes which alter economic base of the city.

(d) The physical spread of cities with the inflow of migrants, who came in search of a means of livelihood as well as a new way of life.

All these processes have been enriched by the influences of the other world cultures in particular those from west Asia and Europe. (Ramachandran 2010 P. 75)

The processes through which urbanization is developed can be explained:

-Urbanization as a social cultural process: It is called that cities are social artifacts. They originated as a result of the emergence of the ruling classes people who controlled and regulated the distribution of goods and services within the society as a whole. In earlier period the rulers were supported by the literate – the educated upper class people, the military, and a host of servants and occasionally slaves.

It is true that urban centers or cities are meeting pots of people with diverse ethnic, linguistics and religions backgrounds. From this fact it is clear that urbanization is a socio cultural process of transformation of folk, peasant or feudal village societies.

- Urbanization as a political – administrative process: From 5<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D. urban centers were emerged, declined or even vanished with the rise and fall of Kingdoms and empires. Such effects were distinct in the cities like Pataliputra, Vijaynagar, Bijapur, Golkanda, Madurai, Kanchanpuram etc. In Assam the urban centers like Sibsagar, Guwahati, Tezpur etc. were famous for the historical elements and this distinct existence is found even in present period. During the British rule, administrative factors played an important role in urbanization. The civil lines and cantonments added a wide variety of the urban areas. After independence because of administrative and political grounds some larger states were divided and as a result new towns with administrative facilities were emerged like the states at lower level new districts were emerged for administrative facilities. Hence town or urban centers were developed. In 1952 the community Development programme was started and a new class of rural service centers was developed. There are 5,026 community development Blocks in India and almost of all the areas of blocks will become full-fledged urban places in course of time.

-Urbanization as an economic process: The transformation of agricultural society in to industrialized society gave rise a good number of towns. Presently, cities or towns are the focal points of productive activities. The towns offer variety of goods and services and these are found both within and outside the city. The economic relation between the cities and their hinterlands is very much crucial for economic development of the modern world and this gives rise the urbanization.

The economic activities in urban areas relate production at three levels-namely-Primary, secondary and tertiary level.

During the British period tertiary sector played an important role in urbanization. The district and 'tehil' headquarters emerged during this period as the main urban centers with the collection or tehsildars offices, the courts, post offices, police station and other institutions of British administration. These centers were further aided by railway station. Educational and medical institutions grew up in this period. In the early part of 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian cities

witnessed the spread of cinema houses; city bus transportation, city tram cars, electricity piped water supply sewerage etc. were introduced in this way tertiary sector provided the basic stimulus to urbanization during the British period.

The cities and towns are the right centers of production, whether at secondary or tertiary level. In such a way the economic factors accelerated the growth of urbanization.

-Urbanization as a geographical process: Since the industrial revolution all the western countries have experienced rapid urbanization the urban population to total population has increased steadily from around 10% to 80%. In the population of urban population to total population was 10% for a long period until 1931, thereafter increased to 18% in 1951 and was around 24% in 1981.

There is a major shift of population to larger cities, while the smaller towns have remained virtually stagnant due to the migration change of location of residence of people the urbanization process is development there are different types of spatial movements of people relevant to the urbanization process. They are:

- The migration of people from rural areas to urban areas.
- The migration of people from smaller towns and cities to larger cities and capitals.
- The spatial overflow of metropolitan population in to peripheral urban fringe villages.

The type of urbanization which is concentrated to rural to urban is called macro-urbanization.

The type of urbanization which is concentrated to migration from smaller towns to large cities and capitals is called metropolization.

And the type of urbanization which is concentrated to the spatial overflow of metropolitan population in to peripheral urban fringe villages is called sub urbanization.

Urbanization in third World Countries:

In one part of the system may not be effectively transmitted to the other parts of the system. It seems that the generative effects of urban growth the “Spread Effects” of economic development may not have as widespread impact as might be hoped. The cities of the third

world are growth rapidly than the growth of urban population in this comparative period of European growth. The rapid and dramatic growth of urbanization in the third world countries tells that the third world countries are passing through an “Urban revolution.” But an uneven urban development is seen in the different countries and region of the globe for example, in Africa about 20% of total population in living in urban place, in South east Asia the percent of the urban population account for 22% while in Latin America countries about 30% of total population lives in the cities of 100,000 and above. But the percentage of urban population in Europe and America is accounted around 80%.

As per the censuses in 1981 and 1991 the urban population in some countries of the third world countries in alone in the following list:

Countries	Urban Population (in percentage)
Sudan	26 %
Ethiopia	14 %
Venezuela	84 %
Brazil	68 %
India	25 %
Malaysia	30 %
Tanzania	13 %
Uganda	9 %
Rwanda	4 %

Table: Urban population in different third world countries

The historical model of urban economic growth as explained by Rostow explains that an “Urban revolution” in the developing countries is of the same dimension which occurred in the developed countries. The model is applied in the way that urbanization is proceeding at a more report pace than expansion of manufacturing employment, which resulted in to a direct shift out of agriculture in to urban oriented services.

Industrialization and urbanization are positively related.

The following table shows the comparison between the levels of urbanization and the percentage of Active Population employed in manufacturing



Countries	Growth rate of urban A	% of active population in manufacturing in B	Relation of A to B
Africa (1990)	23.4	7.0	+91
Latin America (1990)	42.8	14.5	+126
Asia (1990)	23.7	9.0	+52

Table: Source: Paul Bairoch; the economic development of the third world since 1990.

Urbanization is the most powerful socio economic component of modernization. A dichotomy is found between the modern urban civilization of the west and the ancient traditional is also called as metropolitan civilization based on multi-national commercial development. According to G. Trewartha, "The level of urbanization is defined as the proportion of urban population residing in urban places. The shift of population from village to city and the process of transformation of village in to city are called urbanization." Urban development is direct and immediate concern of 26% of population who live in town and cities. But the rate of urban development varies in various regions of the country.

In the India 74% population is rural and 26% is urban from 1921 to 1991 there has been a slow but steady growth of urbanization which is shown below:

Percentage of rural and urban population in India. (1921- 2011)

Term	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Rural	88.8	88.0	86.1	82.7	82.0	80.1	78.0	74.0	72.19	68.84
Urban	11.2	12.0	13.9	17.3	18.0	19.9	22.0	26.0	27.81	31.16

Table: Percentage of rural and urban population in India. (1921- 2011)Source: census of India, from 1921 to 2011

The urban countries as well as population have been growing in India at a faster rate inspire of having adequate infrastructure facilities. The large no population has been migrating from the rural places to urban places for searching the livelihood. The urban rural growth differential (URGD) was expected to go up, but this was declined during the last decade. The annual growth of rural population has actually gone up during last decade. The annual growth of rural population which had declined from 1.96% in 1961-71 to 1.78% in 1971-81 current up to 1.80% in 1981-91 decade

Another and much more potent reason than is usually realized is the fact that city life has begun really to appeal to the ordinary middle class or lower middle class Indian, because for the first time accommodation within his mean to his last has become available. The large blocks of which unless in a decade have completely altered the face of Mumbai and Parts of Calcutta, with their amenities of running water, electric light and the city feature of the term, the bars, the cinema, etc. have meant that every year an increase in the number of persons could be seen who seek to pass their retirement of leisure in a city instead of their former home. The education question is also a powerful as the best education is not available in the country like India where even if the middle class attaches much value to education. This is a powerful influence.

During 1941 census the urban population grew by 40 % and by 1951 it comprised 17% of the total population. The census data show that while the total population grow by 21.5% during the 1950s, urban population grow by 26% In between 1951 to 1961 the urban population increased from 17% to 18% of the total population. This clearly shows that the times of urbanization has really slowed down, due to the changed definition as in 1961 more than 800 places were deurbanized incase the census definition of urban had not changed, the urban population would have increased by 48% in 1991. During the period 1961-71 overall population grow by 7%, but the urban populations grow by 37.9%. The 1991 census data shows that India is urbanizing now in terms of population growth.

The following table will explain the percentage of growth of urban population in India during the period of 1872 – 1991

Census year	Urban population in Million	Decadal growth Rate
1872	15.05	32.89
1881	20.00	10.85
1891	22.17	16.60
1901	25.85	0.35
1911	25.44	8.27
1921	28.08	19.12
1931	33.45	31.97
1941	44.15	41.42
1951	62.44	26.41
1961	78.93	38.22
1971	109.09	38.17
1981	156.18	23.34
1991	212.86	25.72

2001	285	21.54
2011	833.0	17.64

Table: the urban population and decadal growth rate.

Source: www.urban population in India 2011.com

### Migration and Urbanization:

Generally migrants are considered as assets to the urban economy Evidence from Brazil, Colombia, Kenya, Korea, India and Malaysia suggests that migrants increases the urban income. A World Bank study of Bogota, Columbia found that migrants earned more and hence there are more migrants at all educational levels.( Mandal R.B.)

### Role of Migration in Urban Development

1. It assimilates the culture of rural and urban areas.
2. Migration makes people more active in terms of economic development.
3. Most of the marriage migrations from rural to urban areas are forced one but on the other it helps in the increase of urban population.
4. Migration brings money, men and material into the town/city.

Rural to urban migration increases population density in urban centers and decreases population density in rural areas.

Migration helps in change of food habit, living environment and adjustment to a new place about which he or she is unknown since times immemorial.

Migration breaks the cultural and social ties at the place of origin and established a new living environment at the place of destination. Population and Literacy rate in different towns in Assam, 2011

Sl. No.	Name of State/District	Total	Rural	Urban	Percentage of	
					Rural	Urban
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Assam	31169272	26780516	4388756	85.92	14.08

2	Kokrajhar	886999	832249	54750	93.83	6.17
3	Dhubri	1948632	1746715	201917	89.64	10.36
4	Goalpara	1008959	871132	137827	86.34	13.66
5	Barpeta	1693190	1545901	147289	91.30	8.70
6	Morigaon	957853	884557	73296	92.35	7.65
7	Nagaon	2826006	24577906	368100	86.97	13.03
8	Sonitpur	1925975	1754835	171140	91.11	8.89
9	Lakhimpur	1040644	949348	91296	91.23	8.77
10	Dhemaji	688077	639605	48472	92.96	7.04
11	Tinsukia	1316948	1053956	262992	80.03	19.97
12	Dibrugarh	1327748	1083984	243764	81.64	18.36
13	Sivasagar	1150253	1040376	109877	90.45	9.55
14	Jorhat	1091295	871730	219565	79.88	20.12
15	Golaghat	1058674	960892	97782	90.76	9.24
16	Karbi Anglong	965280	851158	114122	88.18	11.82
17	Dima Hasao	213529	152302	61227	71.33	28.67
18	Cachar	1736319	1420309	316010	81.80	18.20
19	Karimghanj	1217002	1106745	110257	90.94	9.06
20	Hailakandi	659260	611087	48173	92.69	7.31
21	Bongaigaon	732639	631813	100826	86.24	13.76
22	Chirang	481818	446290	35528	92.63	7.37
23	Kamrup	1517202	1375188	142014	90.64	9.36
24	Kamrup Metropolitan	1260419	215587	1044832	17.10	82.90
25	Nalbari	769919	687368	82551	89.28	10.72
26	Baksa	953773	941600	12173	98.72	1.28
27	Darrang	908090	852692	55398	93.90	6.10
28	Udalguri	832769	795191	37578	95.49	4.51

Source : District wise distribution of Rural Urban Population and percentage to total population in Assam, 2011

In case of urban population as percentage to total population Assam shows a brighter picture that the urban rate is increasing.

Census Year	Rural Population	Rural Population as Percentage to Total Population	Decadal Growth rate in Percent	Urban Population	Urban Population as percentage to total Population	Decadal growth rate in percent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1901	32,12,606	97.66	-	77,074	2.34	-
1911	37,55,701	97.59	16.91	92,916	2.41	20.55
1921	45,09,873	97.26	20.08	1,27,107	2.74	36.80
1931	53,98,205	97.08	19.70	1,62,166	2.92	27.58
1941	64,86,723	96.89	20.16	2,08,067	3.11	28.30
1951	76,84,025	95.71	18.46	3,44,831	4.29	65.73
1961	1,00,56,041	92.79	30.87	7,81,288	7.21	126.57
1971	1,33,35,930	91.18	32.62	12,89,222	8.82	65.01
1981	-	-	-	-	-	-
1991	1,99,26,527	88.90	49.42	24,87,795	11.10	92.97
2001	2,32,16,288	87.28	16.51	34,39,240	12.90	38.24
2011	2,67,80,516	85.92	15.35	43,88,756	14.08	27.61

Source : Growth of Rural and Urban Population in the State 1901-2011

The total urban population of Assam is 4388756(14.08%) and rural population is 26780516(85.92%) out of total population 31169272 according to census report, 2011

District wise distribution of Rural Urban Population and percentage of Assam is presented below:

Sl. No.	Name of District	Total	Rural	Urban	Percentage of	
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The urban share of population in Assam has been gradually increasing and it is recognized as one of the challenging features of the states like Assam because Assam has lots of structural problems.

Suggestions:

. Some of the suggestive measures are as follows:

- (1) Systematic development of the fast growing urban centers and planning programme for creation of job opportunities should be started by the government with a goal of sustainable urban development.
- (2) Regional planning along with city planning should be started very carefully for proper growth and development of our towns and cities.
- (3) To remove the overcrowding problem of the urban areas and to reduce the high pressure on land the industries the concerned agencies should be encouraged to move to backward areas or districts.
- (4) The financial resources of the urban bodies should be generated through well developed infrastructures in the urban areas so that the people in the urban areas may be benefitted by improved services.
- (5) Private transport along with Government Transportation should be developed properly for the people.
- (6) Pragmatic housing policy should be developed in the urban centers for proper housing facilities.
- (7) Structural decentralization policy should be adopted by the urban government for proper community development through 'neighborhood-action groups'.
- (8) Corruption inside the urban government bodies should be minimized for proper development of the urban areas.

Through these measures, we can expect the development and desirable pace of the urban areas.

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