An Analysis Of Urbanization In India: Problems And Obstacles.

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The process of urbanization in India gained momentum post-independence, largely due to the country's shift towards a mixed economy, which facilitated the growth of the private sector. Urbanization has been progressing rapidly in India, with the urban population increasing from 11.4% in 1901 to 31.16% in 2011, as per the census data. Projections indicate that by 2030, around 40.76% of the country's population will be residing in urban areas. Furthermore, according to the World Bank, India, along with China, Indonesia, Nigeria, and the United States, is expected to lead the global surge in urban population by 2050. This surge in urban population has led to various challenges such as the proliferation of slums, declining living standards in urban areas, and environmental degradation. This study delves into the issues and challenges associated with urbanization in India, focusing on the keywords: Economy, Population, and Urbanization. Urbanization is a prevalent aspect of Indian society, with the growth of industries playing a significant role in the expansion of cities. Industrialization has led to a migration of people towards industrial areas in search of employment, resulting in the development of towns and cities. Urbanization can be described as the concentration of population in a specific territory, involving a shift from agriculture to other urban activities. In 2015, the urban population in India was recorded at 32.75% of the total population, as reported by the World Bank. This data is based on national statistical offices' definitions of urban areas and calculated using estimates from the United Nations World Urbanization Prospects.

Causes of Urbanization:
Industrialization:
Industrialization plays a significant role in urbanization by providing more job opportunities. This leads to rural residents moving to cities in search of better employment prospects.

Social factors:
Various social factors like the allure of city life, improved living standards, better education facilities, and the desire for social status also contribute to the migration of people to urban areas.

Employment opportunities:
In rural areas, agriculture is the primary source of livelihood. However, since Indian agriculture is heavily reliant on monsoons, rural residents are forced to migrate to cities during droughts or natural disasters.

Modernization:
Urban areas offer advanced technology, better infrastructure, communication networks, medical services, etc. This attracts people who believe they can have a more comfortable life in cities.

Rural-urban transformation:
Not only are cities expanding, but rural communities are also adopting urban lifestyles. Rural areas are no longer solely defined by their traditional culture, as rural residents are increasingly embracing the material culture of urban dwellers. This transformation can be seen in various aspects of life.

Spread of education:
The literacy rate has risen among rural communities. They have embraced modernization.

Spread of education:
Rural populations have seen an increase in literacy rates, leading to a more modernized society.

Positive effect:
i. Rural to urban migration
ii. Job prospects in urban areas
iii. Transportation and communication infrastructure
iv. Access to education
v. Improvement in quality of life

The twelfth five year plan (2012-2017) aimed to merge JNNURM and expand its role in urban reforms. The components of JNNURM during the twelfth plan include Urban Infrastructure Governance (UIG), Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY), slum rehabilitation in cities not covered under RAY, and capacity building. The plan also identified obstacles to the program's success, such as the failure to integrate urban planning, incomplete reform, slow progress in project implementation, delays in securing land for projects, and delays in obtaining approval from various regulators.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. Explore the phenomenon of urbanization in India.
2. Examine the issues and challenges surrounding urbanization in India.

METHODOLOGY

The research employs a descriptive approach. Various secondary data sources were utilized, including textbooks, magazines, articles, and websites.

URBANIZATION IN INDIA- ISSUES AND CHALLENGESS

India, despite being one of the less urbanized countries in the world, with only 27.78 per cent of its population residing in urban areas, is currently experiencing a significant urban growth crisis. While urbanization has historically been associated with economic, social, and political advancement, it has also given rise to serious socio-economic challenges. The substantial size of the urban population, uncontrolled and unplanned expansion of urban regions, and a severe lack of infrastructure are the primary factors contributing to this situation. The rapid increase in the urban population, both through natural growth and migration, has placed immense strain on public services such as housing, sanitation, transportation, water, electricity, healthcare, and education. Additionally, poverty, unemployment, and underemployment among rural migrants, as well as social issues such as begging, theft, and burglary, are on the rise. Furthermore, urban sprawl is encroaching upon valuable agricultural land. India's urban population has already surpassed 285 million, and it is projected that by 2030, over 50 per cent of the country's population will reside in urban areas. These pressing issues must be brought to the forefront.

Major Problems of Urbanization in India
Urban sprawl, or the rapid expansion of cities in both population and geographical area, is the main cause of urban issues. Many cities struggle to cope with the problems that come with their excessive size. The influx of people from rural areas and small towns into big cities has consistently increased the size of urban areas. The first major wave of migration from rural to urban areas occurred during the late 1930s, as people sought jobs during the depression. Another million people moved to urban areas between 1941-1951 due to wartime industrialization and the country's partition in 1947. From 1991-2001, over 20 million people migrated to cities. The central districts of cities, or the old city, have felt the greatest impact from the influx of immigrants who initially stay with relatives and friends before finding housing. Population densities decrease significantly beyond the old city. Brush (1968) has described this situation in the central parts of cities as "urban impulsion," resulting from the concentration of people near their work and shopping. Interestingly, many of the fastest-growing urban centers are large cities.

Overpopulation refers to the condition in which an excessive number of individuals reside in a limited area. Overpopulation is a direct result of the high population density in urban regions. It is a natural consequence that cities with a large population crammed into a small area will experience overpopulation. This is evident in nearly all major cities in India. For instance, Mumbai has only one-sixth of an acre of open space per thousand

residents, despite the Master Plan of Greater Mumbai recommending a standard of four acres. Indian metropolitan cities are overpopulated both in absolute terms, with a high population density, and in relative terms, as the challenge of providing services and facilities to city residents persists even when population densities are not extremely high.

Housing shortage in urban areas is exacerbated by overcrowding, particularly in regions with a high influx of unemployed or underemployed immigrants. A 1959 Indian Sample Survey revealed that 44% of urban households occupied one room or less, compared to 34% of rural families. In larger cities, this figure rose to 67%. The slow rate of housing construction further complicates the issue, with only a fraction of the required 2.5 million new dwellings being built annually. Additionally, a significant portion of urban Indian families lack basic amenities such as a kitchen, bathroom, and toilet, with many facing challenges related to power and water supply. Only 79% of urban households reside in permanent houses, with 67% owning their homes and 29% renting.

The issue of unemployment is just as severe as the housing problem mentioned earlier. In urban areas of India, the unemployment rate is estimated to be between 15 to 25 percent of the workforce. This percentage is even higher among those who are educated. It is believed that around half of all educated urban unemployed individuals are concentrated in four major cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai). Additionally, while urban incomes are higher than rural incomes, they are still shockingly low considering the high cost of living in urban areas.

One of the main reasons for urban unemployment is the significant migration of people from rural to urban regions. Rural-urban migration has been ongoing for a long time, but it has not always posed as big of a problem as it does today. The widespread poverty among rural populations drives them to move to urban areas in search of work and in the hopes of a better life.

Unchecked, unplanned, and haphazard urban growth leads to the emergence and expansion of slums and squatter settlements in Indian cities, particularly in metropolitan areas. The rapid urbanization and industrialization have fueled the growth of slums, driven by factors like limited land availability for housing, exorbitant land prices, and a significant influx of rural migrants seeking employment opportunities. Despite various initiatives by the Central and State Governments to curb the rise of slums, their numbers continue to escalate, straining the already burdened civic amenities and social infrastructure.

The issue of transportation in India is exacerbated by traffic bottlenecks and congestion, affecting nearly all cities and towns. As urban areas expand, transportation problems become more intricate. The increased size of the town leads to a variety of functions being performed, resulting in more people commuting for work or shopping. This surge in demand places significant strain on public transportation systems, causing delays in travel times. During peak hours, which typically last around two hours in most cities, buses and trains operate at full capacity, roads become congested with vehicles, and traffic flow slows down considerably.

Water is one of the most crucial elements for sustaining life, and throughout the history of urban civilization, settlement sites have been chosen based on the availability of water for the inhabitants. However, as cities have grown in size and number, the supply of water has not been able to keep up with the demand. Today, practically no city in India has enough water to meet the needs of its residents. Many cities receive water from municipal sources for less than half an hour every other day, and during the dry summer season, taps remain dry for days, leaving people without the water they need.

Sewage Issues:

The urban areas of India are consistently faced with inadequate and ineffective sewage systems. There is not a single city in India that has a fully developed sewerage network. The primary reasons for this dire situation are the financial constraints experienced by municipalities and the unauthorized expansion of urban areas. Recent statistics indicate that only 35-40 percent of the urban population has access to a sewage system. The majority of cities rely on outdated sewerage infrastructure that is not properly maintained. Consequently, sewerage lines frequently experience malfunctions or overflow. Furthermore, many cities lack proper mechanisms for treating sewage waste, leading to its discharge into nearby rivers (such as in Delhi) or seas (like in Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai), thereby contaminating water bodies. In most Indian cities, water pipes are situated in close proximity to sewer lines, posing a risk of water contamination and the subsequent spread of waterborne diseases.

The issue of waste disposal is becoming a major concern as Indian cities continue to grow in both number and size. The large amounts of garbage generated by our urban areas present a significant health hazard. Many cities lack proper waste disposal systems, leading to overflowing landfills. These landfills become breeding grounds for diseases, with harmful toxins seeping into the environment. The decomposition of waste in the open attracts disease-carrying pests like flies and rats, as well as a toxic liquid known as leach ate that contaminate groundwater. Those living near these waste sites are at risk of contracting various illnesses such as dysentery, malaria, plague, jaundice, diarrhea, and typhoid.

Urban Pollution Issue:

As urbanization speeds up, industries and transportation systems expand disproportionately. These advancements are mainly to blame for the pollution of the environment, especially in urban areas. A strong India, economically, socially, and culturally, cannot be envisioned if our cities continue to deteriorate, the quality of urban life decreases, and the urban environment is irreparably harmed. In reality, cities are the

foundation of economic growth, and urbanization is being viewed positively as a catalyst for economic development and a driver of socio-political change.

Government initiatives to enhance urban development.
The 74th Amendment to the Constitution, which was enacted in 1993, aims to enhance urban planning, regulate land use, construct roads and bridges, and provide urban amenities. On the other hand, the National Urban Transport Policy of 2006 is primarily focused on establishing an affordable, comfortable, safe, rapid, reliable, and sustainable urban transport system to cater to the increasing urban population's needs for commuting to work, education, recreation, and other essential services within cities. This policy also promotes integrated land use and transport planning in all cities to minimize travel distances and improve access to livelihoods, education, and social services, particularly for the marginalized urban population. Additionally, the National Urban Renewal Mission (NURM) of 2005 aims to develop economically productive, efficient, equitable, and responsive cities. The JnNURM comprises two sub-missions, namely Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG) and Basic Services for Urban Poor (BSUP). The mission focuses on integrated infrastructure development, establishing linkages between asset creation and maintenance for long-term project sustainability, attracting investments into urban infrastructure services, planned development of cities, including peri-urban areas, outgrowths, and urban corridors, as well as the renewal and redevelopment of inner-city areas.

The introduction of metro trains in cities like Delhi, Kolkata, and Bangalore is a significant step towards improving public transportation infrastructure. Recently, the cabinet approved a proposal for the second phase of the Bangalore Metro (Namma Metro), further enhancing connectivity in the city. Feasibility studies have also been conducted in Tier-II & III cities, paving the way for the implementation of metro projects in these urban areas. The new urban policy allows for million-plus cities to consider metro projects, promoting sustainable and efficient transportation solutions.

India's first monorail, which was first proposed eight years ago, is set to be inaugurated to the public with the support of the Maharashtra government. This development will align India with countries like the U.S., Germany, China, Japan, Australia, and Malaysia that have successfully integrated monorail systems into their public transportation networks.

The concept of smart cities was introduced in the 2014 budget, aiming to establish 'one hundred Smart cities' as satellite towns of major urban centers and revitalize mid-sized cities. While there is no universally accepted definition of smart cities, they are envisioned as hubs of creativity, innovation, digitalization, e-governance, entrepreneurship, and knowledge-based economies. The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is crucial for the development of smart cities, ensuring efficient governance and service delivery to residents.

CONCLUSION

Urbanization has transformed traditional forms of political mobilization rooted in caste and religious affiliations, shifting the focus towards local issues resolved through a rights-based approach. The influence of urbanization extends to various aspects of daily life, including family structures. In rural areas, families typically live in joint households, whereas urban areas predominantly consist of nuclear families. This shift in family dynamics is a direct consequence of urbanization. In metropolitan cities, urban areas are characterized by a diverse population representing various cultures. This cultural diversity fosters positive interactions, allowing individuals to learn about different cultures, exchange ideas, and break down barriers that previously separated them, leading to a cultural hybridization.

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