

URBANIZATION PROCESS IN INDIA



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Short Profile

Ashokkumar V. Paled is working as an H.O.D. and Assistant Professor at Department of Political Science in A.R.M.First Grade College, Davangere Karnataka. He Has Completed M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. He Has Professional Experience 10 Years and Research Experience 2 Years.



ABSTRACT:

The Indian subcontinent shares, with Mesopotamia and the Nile valley civilization history of urbanization. The first phase of urbanization in the Indus valley is associated with the Harappan civilization dating back to 2350 BC. The cities of the civilization flourished over a period of more than 600 years up to about 1700 BC and this was followed by a prolonged period of over a thousand years in which we have no evidence of urban development. From around 600BC, we again come across towns 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 has had a more or less continuous history of urbanization.

KEYWORDS

Urbanization Process, Aryan civilization, Dravidian civilization, Indian urbanization.

INTRODUCTION:

However, we know from historical evidence the theewee both periods of urban growth and periods of urban decline. Thus cities grew in number and in size during the Mauryan and post-Mauryan periods (from 300 BC to AD 600) both in northern India as well as in the extreme south. Cities declined and were largely neglected during the post Gupta period, that is from AD 600 to 1200. Urbanization on a subdued scale flourished in northern India under the influence of Muslim rulers, who came to India from Afghanistan and beyond from around AD 1200, and attained a second climax during the Mughal period, when many of India's cities were established. The British came to India at a time when India was perhaps the most urbanized nation in the world, and the early part of British rule saw a decline in the level of Indian urbanization. During the later half of British rule, Indian cities regained some of their lost importance: further, the British added several new towns and cities, in addition to generating newer urban forms in the existing cities. The post-Independence period has witnessed urbanization in India on a scale never before achieved, it is now expected reach a proposition over 50%. The question that needs to be asked at this juncture is are our cities ready for this? Are our political parties capable of making policies to accommodate this large scale migration and concentrate on inclusive growth.

Ever since 2500 BC, urban places have played an important role in the evolution of India's culture, political, economic and social life. Throughout this long period 4500 years the proportion of the country's total population living in urban areas has fluctuated between five and twenty five per cent. These statistics, however, hide the more significant events of the rise and fall of individual cities and of systems of cities, which made lasting impression south country's cultural and social advancement. The influence of cities, past and present, on our way of life, cannot by any standards be considered as a simple, one-dimensional process. On the other hand, the emergence, spatial spread, growth and decline of cities, have meant different things at different points in time and space. 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 the manifestations of their impact. The history of urbanization in India reveals, broadly, four processes of urbanization at work throughout the historical period. These are: a) emergence of new social relationships among people in cities and between people in cities and those in villages through a process of social change; b) the rise and fall of cities with changes in the political order; c) the growth of cities based on new productive processes, which later the economic base of the city; and d) the physical spread of cities with the inflow of migrants, who come 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 other world cultures; in particular those from west Asia and Europe. This being the process of urbanization, in the modern period, the indulgence of political parties in this process has led to the debate about the role of political parties in the process of Urbanization.

Urban studies in India, within the framework of social science disciplines, are just over six decades old. Patrick Geddes in the University of Bombay initially stimulated interest in towns and cities among Indian social scientists in 1915 and geographers and sociologists took up the study of urban problems to some extent in the 1920s. However, substantive research on urban problems in India belongs to the post-Independence period in all the social science disciplines.

In the late 1920s and the early 1930s nearly a dozen articles on urban geography were published in the Journal of the Madras Geographical association. These articles dealt with the distribution of

urban settlements within administrative areas as well as a descriptive analysis of the location and growth of individual towns and cities in South India. The major spurt in urban studies took place in the early 1950s when the centre of gravity of urban geographical studies shifted from Madras to Calcutta and later to Varanasi.

The growth of urban geography in India is well reflected in the number of articles on urban geography appearing in leading professional journals in geography published from Madras, Calcutta and Varanasi (Since the 1950s, Varanasi has emerged as the primary centre of urban studies in India). In all the leading professional journals in India, the proportion of articles on urban geography began to increase. The spatial diffusion of urban studies is further reflected in the emergence of new journals in centres such as Bombay, Hyderabad and a larger number of centers in Ganga Plain area. By the late 1960s, urban studies had become very popular with geographers in the country. Urban studies were reported in journal articles of towns and cities from Assam to Gujarat and from Kashmir to Tamil Nadu, covering the entire length and breadth of the country.

The earliest urban geographical studies in India were essentially descriptive in nature and focused on the origins and characteristics of individual towns and cities. The stress on the historical roots of urban centers is natural in a country where urbanization is deeply rooted in history and even pre history. The geographical component in the early studies emphasized the role of towns as ports, pilgrimage centers, and as administrative and cultural foci. Attempts were made to explain the loss and gain in the status of towns, both within the historical and the environmental framework. Site characteristics received considerable attention and locations with respect to natural and physical landscape features received special mention. On the structural side, the lay out of the streets and the role of the commercial hub of the city were described in some depth. However, the majority of the studies were exploratory in nature and lacked an analytical framework.

The 1950s saw the emergence of urban geography as a full-fledged area of specialization in Indian geography studies. While this trend continued in India with the geographers the focus shifted from a descriptive to an analytical frame among the Indian political scientists during the same period. Although initially such studies concentrated on the individual cities a major point of departure from the past was the emphasis on primary sources of information collected through actual fieldwork in the towns and cities by the political scientists.

Conceptually, these scholars investigated two sets of problems in this early period: the relation of the city to its hinterland and the internal structure of cities in tandem and tweedum of the developmental requirements. This provided the venue for a luxuriant growth of urban studies. Looking back, however, one discerns a disconcerting lack of initiative in the studies of this genre in exploring new themes and methods for urbanization.

By the early 1960s Indian urban studies had grown out of its colonial linkage with British, and the peer group whom they sought guidance shifted from Europe to America. In line with American urban studies, the focus of urban research in India moved away from the study of individual cities to the problems of classification of urban centers in a regional and national perspective. Before the enthusiasm for town classification could subside, a new and massive wave of ideas based on a normative theory of central places overwhelmed the thinking of Indian urban study enthusiasts, who began to look for central place system in every region, without quite understanding implications of this approach. As a result much of this research is essentially imitative and lacking in relevant and innovative applications of the original theory. Given the Indian urban system, which is far from an ideal normative

system of cities, the search for systems by and large became a futile exercise in the mechanical application of quantitative and statistical methods to prove what was already well known.

Political scientists, particularly those interested in public administration, have during the past decade or so endeavored to examine in some depth the urban polity and its colonial and other ramifications of this in the Independence period on city development and in particular city planning. The failure of the experiment in local self government both under the British rule and in the Independence period, for entirely different reasons, also contributed to adequately highlight the importance of urban studies in India. Urban management under a multiplicity of agencies has generated irresolvable conflicts of interest and responsibility, leading to an inefficient and incompetent municipal administration. The ways out of this mess is not a clear one, for the choice lies inevitably between grass root democracy and an administration dominated by bureaucrats.

Since most of these urban governments were modeled as the mini states with the same democratic spirit and vigor their activities invariably called for the political parties as players with in the game of politics.

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