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## UNIT 4 PATTERNS OF URBANISATION

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### Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Urbanisation: Definition
- 4.3 Urbanisation in India: A Historical Perspective
  - 4.3.1 Classification of Traditional Towns
  - 4.3.2 Some Features of Urbanisation in Ancient and Medieval India
  - 4.3.3 New Features of Urbanisation in Early Colonial Period
- 4.4 Pattern of Urbanisation in Contemporary India
  - 4.4.1 Definition of a Town or City
  - 4.4.2 Demographic Aspect
  - 4.4.3 Spatial Pattern
  - 4.4.4 Economic Dimension
  - 4.4.5 Socio-cultural Character
- 4.5 Problems Concerning the Current Process of Urbanisation
- 4.6 Impact of Urbanisation in Rural Areas
- 4.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.8 Keywords
- 4.9 Further Reading
- 4.10 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

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This unit introduces the concept of urbanisation and the features of traditional and contemporary urbanisation in India. After going through this unit, you should be able to

- define urbanisation
- discuss the historical process of urbanisation in India
- explain the main features of modernisation in contemporary India
- assess the impact of urbanisation on Indian rural scene.

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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In units 2 and 3 we saw how the villages and their social structure form a significant facet of Indian social life. In the present unit on Patterns of Urbanisation we will see how the urban way of life is also a characteristic mode of living in India. This unit begins with the meaning of the concept of urbanisation. It provides a brief review of the historical process of urbanisation. While describing the pattern of contemporary urbanisation, we have talked about the basic **demographic**, spatial, economic and socio-cultural features in

detail. This section also gives a brief account of the emerging problems due to urbanisation in the towns and cities. Lastly, we have examined the impact of urbanisation in the rural areas.

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## 4.2 URBANISATION: DEFINITION

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Sociologists define urbanisation as the movement of people from villages to town/city where economic activities are centred around non-agricultural occupations such as trade, manufacturing industry and management. Broadly speaking, in order to explain the process of urbanisation we can discuss the following three aspects:

- i) The demographic and spatial aspects
- ii) Economic aspects and
- iii) Socio-cultural aspects

In section 4.4 of this unit we discuss each of these aspects in relation to the process of urbanisation in contemporary India. Here we tell you what each of these aspects generally deal with.

The demographic-spatial aspects of urbanisation deal with shift of people from rural to urban areas, population density in urban areas and change in the pattern of land use from agriculture to non-agricultural activities.

Economic aspects of urbanisation relate to the change from agricultural to non-agricultural occupations. As cities have been the centres of diverse economic opportunities, they attract people from rural areas. This attraction pulls a significant section of the rural population to the urban areas. Rural poverty, backwardness of agricultural economy and the destruction of cottage and small industries also push villagers to urban areas. These pull and push factors of **migration** play an important role in the process of urbanisation.

The socio-cultural aspects of urbanisation highlight the emerging heterogeneity in urban areas. The city has generally been the meeting point of races and cultures.

### Check Your Progress 1

- i) Give in three lines the definition of urbanisation.

.....  
.....  
.....

- ii) Mark the correct answer by ticking  $\checkmark$  sign in the following question.

The migration of people to the town due to new opportunities is known by which of the factors given below?

- a) Pull factor of migration
- b) Push factor of migration
- c) Poverty factor
- d) Population factor

## 4.3 URBANISATION IN INDIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The archaeological findings from several parts of Indian sub-continent tend to suggest that the urban growth in India is as old as the history of her civilisation. While considering the early growth of cities and the development of urban areas in undivided India, one can trace their beginnings to about 5,500 years backwards. Around 2500 B.C. the cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa (since 1947 in Pakistan) were established in the valley of Indus river. Archaeologists and historians have pointed out that around 2000 B.C. urbanisation in the Harappan culture exhibited signs of high development in brick technology, geometry, agriculture and irrigation practices.

Another important phase of urbanisation is said to have begun somewhere around 600 B.C. in India culminating in the formation of early historical cities. During the ancient and medieval periods of Indian history, the kings established various capital regions which developed into towns. For example, Pataliputra (now Patna) and Vaishali developed as towns during the Magadh rule around B.C. 300. Kanauj was the capital town of Harshavardhana in Uttar Pradesh in A.D. 700. Mohammad Tughlaq is noted for shifting his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad (Devagiri) in the southern region in A.D. 1300.

The establishment of the East India Company and the onset of British colonial control of India from the seventeenth century led to the growth of urban centres of Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. These cities (except Delhi) developed along the seacoast in the respective regions where the British had established administrative system in terms of provinces.

### 4.3.1 Classification of Traditional Towns

There were several kinds of towns in ancient India. The *Vastusastra* (Treatise on Classical Indian Architecture) has differentiated between several kinds of towns based on their functional specificity such as trade, commerce, manufacturing, administration and military marches. However, the traditional towns can be broadly categorised on the basis of their functional specificities:

- i) **Trading and Manufacturing Towns:** Places termed as *nagar*, *pattana*, *dronamukha*, *kheta*, *nigama* etc. belonged to this category. A *nagar* was an ordinary fortified town with inland trade as an important activity. *Pattana* was a large commercial port situated on the bank of a river or sea. The special feature of the *pattana* was that it was a city of the trading castes (*Vaisya*) and was full of jewels, wealth, silk, perfumes and other articles. *Dronamukha*, *kheta* etc. were also small size trading centres. Again *nigama* was a market town consisting of the artisans and also serving as a resting place for “traders and caravans”.
- ii) **Political or Military Town:** *Rajdhani* was a distinctively planned political town. It was the royal capital. *Durga* was a fortified town equipped with an arsenal and well-stored with food stuffs. Similarly *senamukha* and *shaniya* were also the fortified towns of varied locations and importance.
- iii) **Educational or Pilgrim and Temple Towns:** *Matha* and *Vihara* were the towns based on educational and religious activities. A classic example

of this was Nalanda. Again, there were temple towns like Dwaraka, Tirupati, Puri etc. and pilgrim centres like Hardwar, Gaya etc.

### Activity 1

Sketch a map of India and identify the places where the traditional urban centres were located.

## 4.3.2 Some Features of Urbanisation in Ancient and Medieval India

The process of urbanisation in various periods of Indian history had distinctive spatial, economic, religious, socio-cultural, political features. These features are described here under three broad headings.

### 1) Political, Demographic and Spatial Factors

The early processes of urbanisation had their close relationships with the rise and fall of sponsoring political regimes and cultural history of India. Indeed, cities emerged in those periods mainly based on political considerations. “The composition of these towns was built around the ruler and his kinsmen and followers, whose principal interests were centered on agricultural activities in their vicinity and the surplus they could extract from these” (Sabarwal 1977: 2).

Fortification in the form of a girdle of walls and defensive ditches was an important physical feature of the traditional towns. Town planning of ancient cities not only took note of the needs of defense but also of the settlement of various castes in separate wards, and the location of different activities connected with manufacturing, commerce, trade, religion, recreation, administration and justice.

### 2) Economic

In spite of the rise and fall of the political powers and shifting religious biases, the social and economic institutions of the traditional cities have shown certain stability.

Guild formation was an important feature of traditional towns. Merchants and craftsmen were organised into guilds called *shreni*. In those towns there were the guilds based on the occupation of one caste called *shreni* and also the guilds based on different castes and different occupations called *puga*. Rao (1974) points out that the guilds performed important function in the traditional towns in terms of banking, trading, manufacturing and to a limited extent judicial.

### 3) Religious and Socio-cultural

Authorities of the traditional urban centres patronised particular religion or sects. This had been delineated in the social organisation and culture of the towns. For example, Pataliputra reflected the Brahmanical Hindu civilisation under the rule of Chandra Gupta Maurya, while under Ashokan rule Buddhism nourished. Similarly the Islamic civilisation was concretised by the Muslim rule in the imperial capitals of Agra, Delhi, Lucknow, Hyderabad and in other places. The traditional towns were heterogeneous in terms of multiplicity of

religious, sectarian and caste groups. Certain specialist castes like florist, mason and tailor were to be found only in big towns. Each ethnic or religious group was governed by its own customary laws. The caste and the occupational guilds also had their own laws sanctioned by the political authority (Rao 1974).

**4.3.3 New Features of Urbanisation in Early Colonial Period**

With the coming of European colonial traders in India, the process of urbanisation entered into a new phase. Cities grew up in the coastal areas as ports-cum-trading centres. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries European trading posts were established initially for trading purposes. As the British power grew in the nineteenth century, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras became the political centres too. Indeed, in this period with the introduction and development of advanced technological knowledge, we find the emergence of new economic and political institutions, new modes of communication such as telegraph, railways, advanced system of roads and waterways. The process of urbanisation became smooth and widened the structure of economic opportunity and widened the social horizons of people.

In the nineteenth century, though the process of urbanisation grew in a modest way, the countryside suffered from the gradual process of the destruction of the cottage and small industries in the rural areas. In this situation, the new economic opportunity structure pulled a significant section of population to the urban areas. Many of the artisans became unemployed. Hence, the displaced rural artisans and labourers were also pushed to urban areas for employment. The late nineteenth century, however, witnessed a large-scale migration of the rural labour force especially from Bihar and eastern United Provinces towards the jute mills of Calcutta and other industrial destinations. To avail the new economic opportunities many people migrated either temporarily or permanently to the urban areas.

With the spread of education, the institutional arrangements of the urban centres also changed. The educated people joined the bureaucracy, and also took up jobs as teachers, journalists, lawyers and so on. They brought about a new worldview. The urban centres gradually grew up to be the centres of new social and political ideas, diverse economic activities and of heterogeneous populations. The new process of urbanisation presented various economic opportunities and scope for occupational and social mobility, it was only the upper caste and class people who were able to make use of these opportunities.

The new process of urbanisation, which began, with the advent of the British received a momentum at the beginning of twentieth century. The process of this urbanisation has some distinctive features. In the next section we shall describe the pattern of urbanisation during the twentieth century.

**Check Your Progress 2**

- i) What do you understand by Shreni? Answer in two lines.  
 .....  
 .....
- ii) Which of the words given in options a, b, c, and d can fill the blank space in the following sentence?

In the early colonial period, the volume of economic opportunities of people ..... in the urban areas.

- a) enlarged
- b) remained the same
- c) minimised
- d) none of the above

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## **4.4 PATTERN OF URBANISATION IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA**

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India passed through a phase of rapid urbanisation in the twentieth century. The modern urban centres perform diversified functions in terms of economic, administrative, political, cultural and so on. Here, it is very difficult to classify the towns and cities in terms of a single activity. Generally, people classify urban areas on the basis of some prominent socio-economic and political features. For example, people mention that there are historical cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Varanasi, Lucknow etc., industrial cities like Ghaziabad, Modinagar, Kanpur, Jamshedpur, Bhilai etc., religious cities like Mathura, Hardwar, Madurai, Allahabad etc. Cities reputed for film making, like Mumbai and Chennai, have a special appeal for a villager or a small-town dweller. In sociology, we discuss the pattern of urbanisation in terms of its demographic, spatial, economic and socio-cultural aspects. But before we take up these aspects, let us also briefly explain how we define a town in the Indian context.

### **4.4.1 Definition of a Town or City**

In India, the demographic and economic indexes are important in defining specific areas as town or city. The definitional parameters of an urban area in India have undergone several changes and modifications over the years. The following definition of town adopted in 1901 census was used until 1961.

- a) Every municipality, cantonment and all civil lines (not included in a municipality), and
- b) Every other continuous collection of houses permanently inhabited by not less than 5,000 persons, which the provincial superintendent of census may decide to treat as a town.

The main criterion for describing any area or settlement as urban was its administrative set-up and size and not the economic characteristics. As a consequence of this definition many of the towns in reality were considered only as overgrown villages.

In 1961 the 'urban area' was redefined taking into account the economic characteristics in addition to other administrative and demographic features. The definition adopted in 1961 census was also used in 1971 and 1981. And it remained unchanged in 1991 and 2001 also. According to this definition an urban area is:

- a) a place which is either a municipal corporation or a municipal area, or under a town committee or a notified area committee or cantonment board,  
or



b) any place which satisfies the following criteria of:

- a minimum of 5,000 persons
- at least 75 percent of the working occupations are non-agricultural
- a density of not less than 1,000 persons per square mile, and
- a place should have certain pronounced urban characteristics and amenities such as newly found industrial areas, large housing settlements, places of tourist importance and civic amenities.

Apart from well defined towns and/or cities, the outgrowths of cities and towns have also been treated as urban agglomerations. At the 1961 census, the concept of 'town group' was adopted to obtain a broad picture relating to urban spread. This was refined in 1971 with the concept of urban agglomeration to obtain better feed back in regard to urban continuity, process and trends of urbanisation and other related matters. This concept without any change or modification has remained operative till 2001 census. An urban agglomeration forms a continuous urban spread and normally consists of a town and its adjoining urban outgrowth or two or more physically contiguous towns together with contiguous and well organised outgrowths, if any, of such town. (*Census Report 2001*)

While describing the urban places, the Indian census records consistently employ population size to classify the urban area into six classes as shown in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Classification of cities**

Class I	with	1,00,000	and more	population
Class II	with	50,000	to 99,999	population
Class III	with	20,000	.... 49,999	population
Class IV	with	10,000	.... 19,999	population
Class V	with	5,000	.... 9,000	population
Class VI	with	less than	.... 5,000	population

In India, urban places with less than 1,00,000 population are referred to as "towns", while urban places with 1,00,000 or more population are referred to as "cities". Urban centres with more than one million population are categorised as metropolitan cities. The metropolitan centres are a class by themselves characterised by large-scale consumption, and large quantum of inflow of people, goods, services and information (Prakasa Rao 1982: 17). Having described how urban area in India is classified into various categories of towns/cities, we now discuss some aspects of the pattern of urbanisation in India.

### Activity 2

Identify the class of town/city you live in. Use the method of classification employed by the Indian census records.

Or

If you live in a rural area, give the class of the town/city nearest to your village.

#### 4.4.2 Demographic Aspect

In India, population concentration has been one of the key features of urbanisation. The percentage of urban population has been little more than doubled from 10.8 percent in 1901 to 23.3 percent in 1981. And this has been almost tripled by 2001, when it has been recorded to be 27.8 percent. The urban population of India as per the 1991 census is 217,177,625 and this accounts for 25.72 percent of the total population. So far urban population of the country is concerned, only 25.85 million lived in towns in 1901 and by 1991 it increased by more than 8 times to 217.18 million. Out of the total population of 1027 million as on 1st March 2001, 285 million lived in urban areas. The net addition of population in urban areas during 1991-2001 has been to the tune of 68 million where as during the decade 1981-1991 it was 61 million.

Urban population has significantly increased in the post Independence period. For the forty years period from 1901 to 1941 the increase of urban population from 25.85 to 44.15 million has been quite modest compared to the 62.44 million of the next decade. There has been an increase of 115.05 million in urban population from 1941 to 1981. Note that 64.8 percent of this population has grown in the two decades between 1961 and 1981. Similarly the urban population has almost doubled in the decades 1971 (109.11 million) to 1991 (217.18 million).

There was a slow growth (and also decline in 1911) in the proportion of urban to total population in the early decades (1901-21). This is mostly because of natural disasters and slow rate of industrial and economic development. The rapid growth of urban population during 1941-51 has been mostly due to partition of the country and other political reasons, which led to refugee migration in the urban areas. The steady increase in the urban population in the decades prior to 1981 came about not so much because of planned economic development and industrialisation, but due to imbalanced agricultural development. The annual rate of growth of urban population declined from 3.83 percent during 1971-1981 to 3.09 percent during 1981-1991. During the decade 1971-1981 the level of urbanisation increased by 3.43 percent points. During 1981-1991 decade the increase has been only 2.38 percent. The increase in the urbanisation further declined to 2.1 percent points during the decade 1991-2001. As a consequence the annual rate of gain in percentage of urban population has also declined from 1.72 to 1.02 during the decade 1981-1991. This indicates that the tempo of urbanisation in India has slowed down since 1981.

#### 4.4.3 Spatial Pattern

Spatial disparities have marked the Indian urban scenario. These disparities emerged mainly due to regional disparities, imbalanced population concentration and some times because of the change in the census definition of “urban areas”. In this context we need to mention about two concepts, namely over-urbanisation and sub-urbanisation.

##### **Over-urbanisation**

Towns or urban areas have certain limitations in accommodating population, providing civic amenities or catering to such needs as schooling, hospitals etc.



Beyond certain optimum capacities, it becomes difficult for the town administration to provide facilities for the increasing population. Mumbai and Kolkata are two such examples of cities (among others) which have urban population growth beyond their capacities to manage. This feature refers to over-urbanisation.

### **Sub-urbanisation**

Closely related to over-urbanisation of a town is a feature called sub-urbanisation. When towns get over-crowded by population, it may result in sub-urbanisation. Delhi is a typical example (among others) where sub-urbanisation trend is taking place around it. Sub-urbanisation means urbanisation of rural areas around the towns characterised by the following features:

- a) a sharp increase in the 'urban (non-agricultural) uses' of land
- b) inclusion of surrounding areas of town within its municipal limits, and
- c) intensive communication of all types between town and its surrounding areas.

Now, we can also look at some of the variations in spatial disparities found in the pattern of urbanisation in India.

#### **i) The Growth of Towns and Cities**

The growth of urban towns did not show a unidirectional progress in India. Because of the variation in the census definition of 'urban' areas the number of urban centres declined. Only 1,430 towns out of a total of 1,914 towns existing in 1901 survived till 1961. About 480 areas considered as towns in 1901 lost their urban status because of the new definition of town in 1961 census. It is for this reason that one can see the decrease in the number of towns to 2700 in 1961 compared to 3060 in 1951. For example, in Rajasthan there were 227 towns in 1951, whereas this number declined to 201 in 1981. Similar decline has also been noticed in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. In the 1991 census 4,689 places were identified as towns as against 4,029 in 1981 census. Out of the 4,689 towns of 1991 as many as 2,996 were statutory towns and 1,693 were census or non-municipal towns as against 2,758 and 1,271 respectively in 1981. At the all India level, 93 of the 4029 towns of 1981 census were declassified and 103 towns were fully merged with other towns by statutory notifications of the concerned state/union territory administrations during 1981-1991. As many as 856 new towns were added to the urban frame of 1991. The maximum number of towns declassified were from the states of Punjab (21), Karnataka (19), and Andhra Pradesh (13) and the maximum number of the statutory towns added in 1991 census was from Madhya Pradesh (91).

#### **ii) Variation in Urbanisation among the States**

The pattern of urbanisation among different states in India shows an interesting feature of urban domination in some states. Five states namely Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh altogether accounted for 56 percent (in 1961) to 55 percent (in 1971) of the total urban population of India. In contrast the six states of Orissa, Haryana, Assam (including Meghalaya), Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland

account for 5 percent (in 1961) to 5.5 percent (in 1971) of the total urban population of India. In 1991 census some of the states having a higher proportion of urban population to the total population than the national average of 25.72 percent were Maharashtra (35.73 percent), Gujarat (34.40 percent), Tamil Nadu (34.20 percent) and West Bengal (27.39 percent). As per the Census 2001, Tamil Nadu (43.9 percent) is the most urbanized state followed by Maharashtra (42.4 percent) and Gujarat (37.4 percent). The proportion of the urban population is lowest in Bihar with 10.5 percent followed by Assam (12.7 percent) and Orissa (14.9 percent). Himachal Pradesh is the least urbanized state. These show that the urban domination in some states continues to exist even at the beginning of twenty first century.

Between 1961 and 1971 the pattern of **urban density** for Indian states shows somewhat similar trends. The states of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Assam and Kerala have densities higher than the all India average of 2948 persons per sq. km in 1961. A similar trend was found in 1971 also. States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir, Orissa, Bihar and Rajasthan had densities less than the all India average of 2,048 in 1961. The 1971 census reflected the same trend that was seen in 1961, with respect to the above mentioned states. Urban density for Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Assam lessened, during 1961-71 decade, possibly because of outward migration of people. In the year 1991, the urban density was highest in the state of West Bengal followed by Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana and Punjab. States of Tamil Nadu, Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir, Orissa, Bihar and Rajasthan had densities less than the all India average of 3,370 in 1991 also. Thus when we look at the census figures we can see that the variation in terms of the urban density continued to the year 1991 almost unchanged.

### **iii) Population concentration in the cities**

The population in the larger urban centres (with 1,00,000 or more) has constantly been growing in India. In 1981 more than 60 percent of the urban population in India lived in this category of cities. By 1991 their rate reached almost 65 percent. Out of the total number of towns, according to the 1991 census, in 300 the population exceeds 1,00,000 each. These 300 urban agglomeration/cities account for 64.89 percent of the urban population of the country. In the case of Maharashtra and West Bengal the share of Class I urban agglomerations/ cities in the urban population is high, being 77.85 percent and 81.71 percent respectively. Class I urban agglomeration/ cities contribute about two thirds of the urban population in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Meghalaya and Tamil Nadu.

### **iv) Growth of Metropolitan Cities**

In India, Kolkata was the only city with a population of over a million in 1901. Mumbai crossed the one million mark by 1911. Till 1941 there were only these two cities in this category, i.e., with a population of over one million. Delhi, Chennai and Hyderabad entered into this category by 1951. Ahmedabad and Bangalore by 1961, and Kanpur and Pune by 1971. Lucknow, Nagpur and Jaipur by 1981 crossed the one million mark bringing the number of million-plus cities upto 12. At the time of 1991 census enumeration there were 23 metropolitan agglomerations/ cities with a population of more than a million each. The number almost doubled during the decade 1981-1991. Its number

has been increased to 35 at the time of 2001 census. At the time of 1981 census 25 percent of the total urban population was concentrated in the million-plus cities. By the year 1991 this has become 32.54 percent. That means that these cities in 1991 accounted for roughly one third of the country's urban population and one twelfth of the country's total population.

In 1981 barring Delhi which forms part of the Union Territory of Delhi, the remaining 11 cities are located in 8 states. In 1991, the 23 metropolitan cities were scattered among 13 states in India. But their concentration was more in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh, each having 3 such metropolitan cities. Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have two each and 7 were distributed among Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Delhi. In Kolkata the concentration of urban population was higher than other metropolitan cities for the decade 1971-81. This was followed by Bangalore, Chennai and Ahmedabad. The 23 metropolitan cities exhibited quite a diversified pattern of growth of population during 1981-1991. Of these metropolitan cities the highest growth of population was recorded in Visakhapatnam urban agglomeration (74.27 percent) followed by Hyderabad urban agglomeration (67.04 percent), both of which are in Andhra Pradesh. The lowest growth rate was recorded by Kolkata urban agglomeration (18.73 percent) followed by Patna urban agglomeration. Kolkata urban agglomeration which occupied the prime position since 1901 in terms of highest concentration of urban population relegated to the second position in 1991 and Greater Mumbai which occupied the second position since 1901 has been moved to the prime position in 1991. Kolkata was followed by Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad and Bangalore. In 1988, while describing the glaring disparities that marked the Indian urban scene, the National Commission on Urbanisation stated two main aspects: (a) while the urban centres in India grew at an average rate of 46.2 percent during the 1970s, the million-plus metropolitan centres had an average growth rate of population only 29.6 percent during the same period, and (b) the significant regional variation in the nature of urbanisation process. Indeed, spatially the pattern of Indian urbanisation has been highly localised.

#### **4.4.4 Economic Dimension**

Urbanisation is a natural and inevitable consequence of economic development. Urbanisation accompanies economic development because economic development entails a massive shift of labour and other inputs from predominantly rural sectors to those predominantly urban (Mill and Becker 1986: 17). The National Commission on Urbanisation of India recognises the economic importance of the Indian cities and towns. It considers "urbanisation as a catalyst for economic development and that the towns and cities despite their problems are for the millions and millions of our people the road to a better future".

When we examine the various cities in India, we find that some cities have come up during twentieth century in places where there were nothing but forests earlier. One of the first steel cities in India, like Jamshedpur in Bihar, has provided employment to a large number of people including the Santals who are the local tribal inhabitants of this area. These tribals who were relatively isolated earlier have come into contact with a wide section of Indian population, coming from different regions, speaking different languages, and so on. Besides

Jamshedpur, three more steel towns have emerged after Independence. These are Bhilai in Madhya Pradesh, Rourkela in Orissa and Durgapur in West Bengal. Emergence of these steel factories has brought about not only prosperity but has led to the modification of the whole social scenario of this area. Areas that were socio-economically backward have now become prosperous and cosmopolitan (Srinivas 1986:88).

While talking about the economic features of urbanisation in contemporary India, occupational diversification and migration appear to be the key aspects. Let us briefly examine these aspects.

**i) Occupation**

The degree of urban-industrialisation and planned development through the Five-Year Plans could not bring about a significant shift in occupational structure in India till 1990. The percentage of Indian labour force in agriculture remained static between 1901 and 1971. In the said period 69.4 percent and 69.7 percent of the total labour force was in agriculture respectively. Though the percentage of urban population increased substantially during this period there have not been corresponding increase in the percentage of the labour force in the urban manufacturing, construction and service sector. Things have started improving slightly by 2001. In 1991 around 67 percent of the total workers were in the agricultural sector. In 2001 only 58 percent of the total workers have been recorded to be in the agricultural sector. The results from 2001 census clearly suggest a shift in the composition of labour force from a predominantly agricultural to moderately non-agricultural sector. (Census Report 2001)

The percentage of urban workers engaged in primary (comprising cultivation, household industry, mining quarrying, fishing), secondary (comprising manufacturing and processing) and tertiary (comprising commerce and service) sectors during 1993-94 is 16.8, 31 and 52.1 percent, respectively (see table 4.2). Whereas the total workforce engaged in these three sectors during the same period is 67.5, 12.0 and 20.5, respectively.

**Table 4.2: Percentage of Urban Workers by Sectors, 1993-94**

Sector	Male	Female	Total
Primary	9.0	24.7	16.8
Secondary	33.0	29.1	31.0
Tertiary	57.9	46.3	52.1

Source: NSSO 1996

There is widespread unemployment among the unskilled and other marginal workers in most of the cities. Again, unemployment among educated classes in urban areas is a peculiar feature in Indian society. It is estimated that 46 percent of the total educated unemployed are reported to be concentrated in the four major metropolitan cities in India (Sarikwal 1978). During the period 1983 to 1999-2000, the percentage of persons in the labour force at the national declined from 66.5 percent in 1983 to 61.8 percent in 1999-2000. The growth in employment for persons employed in the age group 15 years and above on

the usual principal and subsidiary status has declined significantly in the nineties vis-à-vis the eighties. And this has led to the increased incidence of unemployment. There was an increase in the incidence of unemployment both for males and females on the whole and in particular for rural areas. In the case of urban areas, however, there was a sharp decline between 1983 and 1993-94 from 5.1 percent to 4.6 percent, which has been somewhat eroded by a subsequent increase to 4.8 percent in 1999-2000 (National Human Development Report 2001).

## ii) Migration

In the process of urbanisation in India, migration of the rural people to the urban areas has been continuous and is an important feature. The Urban Commission of India viewed rural urban migration to be “of vital importance for the development of rural areas”. The Commission again points out that besides releasing the surplus labour from the rural areas, for the landless labourers, *harijans* and *adivasis* these cities provide the opportunities, which are enshrined in our constitution. For these millions, our urban centres will continue to be havens of hope, where they can forge a new future (Mehta 1984: 1178).

In India, this increase in urban-ward migration is of fairly recent origin which began in the late 1930s. Of the total migrants in urban areas 20 percent persons are displaced from Pakistan, 51 percent from rural areas of the same state and 2.5 percent from the rural areas of other states. An important feature of the immigrant stream in urban areas is its predominantly male character (Sarikwal 1978: 25).

Due to the increase of unemployment in the rural areas, surplus rural labour force gets pushed to urban centres with the hope of getting employment. The other factors, which have pulled sections of the rural population (including the affluent sections) toward the city, have been the expectation of a variety of glamorous jobs, good housing, medical, educational and communication facilities.

Here it is significant to note that industrialisation should not be taken as prerequisite for urbanisation, as the process of migration from village starts when a relative saturation point is reached in the field of agriculture. This is a result of an imbalanced land/man ratio in the countryside.

### Activity 3

If you live in a rural area find out how many of your relatives in the village have migrated to the urban areas. After making this survey, write a note on the cause(s) of their migration.

Or

If you live in an urban area, visit a slum and write a short note on the causes of migration of about twenty families in that area.

## 4.4.5 Socio-cultural Character

In the process of urbanisation the towns and cities of India have achieved heterogeneous character in terms of ethnicity, caste, race, class and culture. In



the urban areas there has always been coexistence of different cultures. Studies show that though various ethnic and/or caste groups have adjusted themselves with each other in the city, they have also tried to maintain their traditional identity. The migrants have maintained distinctive cultural traditions in the towns. Various migrant groups have maintained their own cultural identity. N.K. Bose (1968: 66) points out that the migrants tend to cluster around people with whom they have linguistic, local, regional, caste and ethnic ties. A study by Jagannathan and Haldar (1989: 315) on the pavement-dwellers in Calcutta shows that they retain close ties with kinship and caste groups for socialising and transmitting or receiving information from the village. Thus cultural-pluralism has been an important socio-cultural dimension of the urbanites.

Many of the Indian towns have a “mixed” character, i.e., they are the capital cities, centres of trade and commerce, important railway junctions etc. In these types of cities we find a “core” area which consists of the old inhabitants (Srinivas 1986). This area is the oldest in the city and on its fringe we find the new immigrants. The pattern of residence of this “core” population shows a close relation to language, caste and religion. Bombay is cited as an example of this type of city.

Lynch (1974) also points out that in many Indian cities, especially in the traditional cities like Agra, neighbourhoods have remained homogeneous in terms of caste and religious groups. There the untouchable Jatavs caste is concentrated in particular areas called *mohallas* (ward). But changes have taken place mostly because of politicisation, spread of education, and occupational diversification. But D’Souza (1974) noticed that in the planned city like Chandigarh neighbourhood has not been developed on the basis of ethnicity, common interest and other similarities. In this city the religious activities, friendship and educational ties are often outside one’s own neighbourhood.

Social stratification has taken a new form in the urban society. It is assumed that with urbanisation caste transforms itself into class in the urban areas. But caste systems do exist in the cities though with significant organisational differences. Ramkrishna Mukherjee demonstrates that people in Kolkata rank themselves in terms of caste-hierarchy. Stratification has also taken place on the basis of occupational categories. For example, Harold Gould (1965) points out that the *rikshawalas* of Lucknow belonging to several religious and caste groups exhibit uniformity in the pattern of interaction and attitudes in respect to their common occupation. Again it has been found that caste has not played a significant role in determining the choice of occupation in the urban areas. But it is important to note that both the caste and the class have their respective importance based on time and space and situational focus (Rao 1974: 275).

Marriage and family are two important aspects of social life. In the urban areas caste norms have been flexible with regard to the selection of mates. There have been increasing opportunities for the free mixing of young men and women. Again the voluntary associations have encouraged inter-caste marriages. As a result there have been more inter-caste and inter-religious marriage in the urban areas than earlier. Though it has been pointed out that joint families are breaking down in the urban areas, studies conducted in several parts of the country also suggest that joint families do exist in the cities among certain castes like Khatri of Delhi and Chettiars of Madras (for details see Kapoor 1965, Singer 1968).



Cities of India have to be studied in the context of cultural heritage. In the cities many little traditions have been brought in by the migrants and the great traditions have also achieved dimensional change. It has been pointed out that many forms of the great traditions are modified in the modern cities. Milton Singer (1968) shows that “the intellectual and ritualistic approaches to God are being discarded in favour of the devotional approach, which is more catholic and suited to urban conditions in Madras city. Technological innovations like microphone, cinema, automobile, etc. are used in promoting religious activities. Religious activities are not on decline in the metropolitan city of Madras but are being modernised”.

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## 4.5 PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE CURRENT PROCESS OF URBANISATION

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The current process of urbanisation has faced many problems in different parts of India. The most important of these has been the development of slums, in the urban areas. Slum population accounts for a substantial share of urban population in all types of cities in India. Even a planned city like Chandigarh has not escaped slums. The percentages of the slum population in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai are 32,25 and 24, respectively. Slums are characterised by substandard housing, over crowding and lack of electrification, ventilation, sanitation, roads and drinking water facilities. Slums have been the breeding ground of diseases, environmental pollution, demoralisation, and many social tensions. Crimes, like juvenile delinquency, gambling, have also increased in number in slum areas. Signs of poverty are most visible in these places. A graphical representation of a slum is shown in figure 4.1.

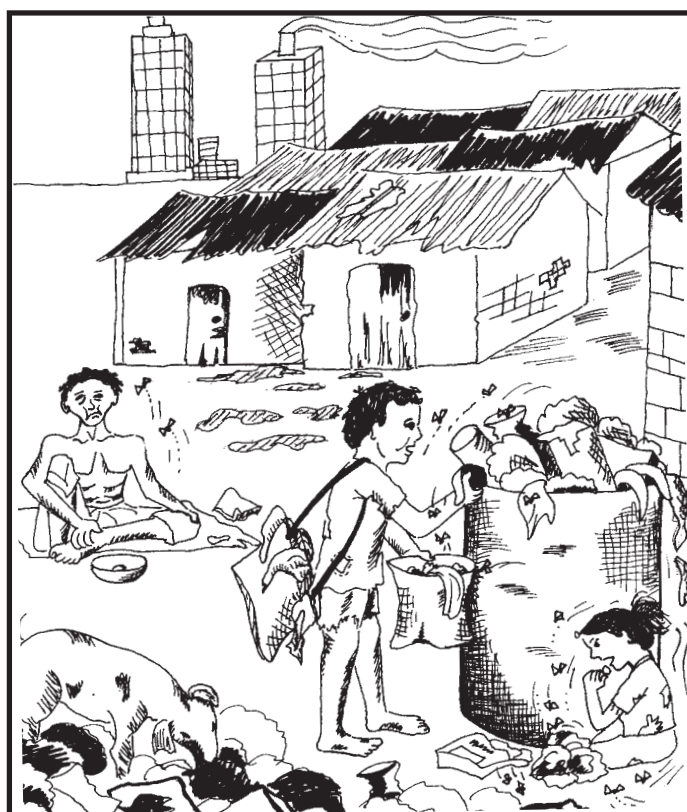


Fig. 4.1: Poverty and slums

Lack of housing has been another important problem in the process of urbanisation in India. This problem has been acute in cities with over a million population. Related to housing there have been problems on the planned use of urban land. The lack of adequate housing has been very marked especially for the lower income group and for the urban poor. In the light of the gravity of this problem, the government has passed the Urban Land Ceiling Act, Rent Control Act etc. The National Council on Urbanisation has also recommended that at least 15 percent of all new developments should be earmarked for the use of the economically weaker sections of the urban population.

Absence of planned and adequate arrangements for traffic and transport is another important problem in majority of urban centres in India. Though various new modes of transport and advanced technology have been used in our metropolitan cities to facilitate the movement of the people, these have remained insufficient to cope with the growing population there. Similarly, the extent of facilities medical, sanitation, drinking water, power-supply have remained insufficient in a majority of the urban centres in India.

After examining the extent of availability of facilities like housing, transport and traffic, medical, sanitation, electricity etc. in the urban areas, and the growth of urban population, one may say that there has been a tendency of over-urbanisation in India. The process of urbanisation in India has also been accompanied by sub-urbanisation. The development of modern modes of transport, and increasing demands on housing have led to the growth of sub-urbanisation. The sub-urban areas are growing at a faster rate in the metropolitan cities like Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Delhi and in all big cities of India.

The Urban Development Policy of India has been formulated to ensure that the urban centres play a positive role in national and regional development, to promote the **rural-urban continuum** and to replace the regional disparities. The Five Year Plans of the government of India have included various programmes pertaining to housing, slum clearance, slum improvement, land acquisitions and development.

The Sixth Plan placed special emphasis on development of National Capital Region (NCR) to de-concentrate economic activity from the core of Delhi into regional towns (Rao 1983). The concept of NCR aims to bring better regional parities in the process of economic development and social change in a vast area around Delhi. It has been formulated in order to meet the growth and expansion needs of the capital. The plan covers integrated development of about 30,000 sq. km in the Union Territory of Delhi and parts of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. A statutory body has been constituted through an enactment of Parliament in 1985 and a draft regional plan has since been prepared for the development of NCR (Government of India 1987: 597). The resource base of the National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) includes budgetary allocation through plan provision and institution borrowing in the form of line of credit, priority sector loans from financial institutions and market borrowings in the form of taxable and tax-free bonds as extra budgetary resources. The Ninth plan provision for NCRPB was Rs.200 crore and during the Ninth plan the board has envisaged Internal and External Budgetary resources of Rs.3120 crore, to be mobilised from the capital market. The NCRPB has facilitated the development of infrastructure facilities in

different cities of the region including roads, bridges, water supply, sewerage disposal facilities etc.

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## 4.6 IMPACT OF URBANISATION IN THE RURAL AREAS

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In India, urbanisation along with westernisation and modernisation has furthered the process of rapid social change both in the rural and in the urban areas. One of the important results of urbanisation is the rural to urban migration. Migration has become a continuous process affecting the social, economic and cultural lives of the villagers widely. Rao (1974) distinguishes three different situations of urban impact in the rural areas. In the villages from where large numbers of people migrate to the far off cities, urban employment becomes a symbol of higher social prestige. Villages, which are located near the towns, receive an influx of immigrant workers and face the problems of housing, marketing and social ordering. Lastly, in the process of the growth of metropolitan cities some villages become the rural-pockets in the city areas. Hence the villagers directly participate in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the city.

Srinivas pointed out that urbanisation in southern India has a caste component and that, it was the Brahmin who first left the village for the towns and took advantage of western education and modern professions. At the same time as they retained their ancestral lands they continued to be at the top of the rural socio-economic hierarchy. Again, in the urban areas they had a near monopoly of all non-manual posts.

However, the anti-Brahmin movement and the economic depression of the nineteen thirties led to the migration of Brahmins from the south and rural areas to metropolitan cities (Srinivas 1974: 468).

As a result of migration there has been a flow of urban money into the rural areas. Emigrants regularly send money to their native villages. Such money facilitates the dependants to clear off loans, build houses and educate children.

The urban centres of India have become the centres of national and international linkages. At present, many cultural traits are diffused from cities to the rural areas. For example, dress patterns like pants, shirts, ties, skirts, jeans etc. diffuse from cities to the rural areas. Besides these, new thoughts, ideologies are also diffused from the cities to the rural areas due to an increase in communication via radio, television, newspaper, computer, the Internet and telephone. The urbanism, which emerges in the cities gradually, reaches to the rural areas, depending on their proximity to the cities.

The process of urbanisation has not been an isolated phenomenon. At present, along with the whole gamut of occupational diversification, spread of literacy, education, mass communication etc., continuity between rural and urban areas has increased. Urban jobs and other amenities of living have become status symbols in the rural areas. Many modern techniques of agricultural development and many of the institutional frameworks for rural development also generate from the urban centres. The large-scale commercialisation of agriculture has also been facilitated by the process of urbanisation. Similarly, agricultural

requirements for machinery have generated the growth of manufacturing units in urban areas.

**Check Your Progress 3**

- i) What is the trend in the flow of urban population in India? Tick mark the correct answer.
  - a) A steady increase
  - b) A state of stagnation
  - c) Both of the above
  - d) None of the above

- ii) Fill in the blank space in the following sentence by selecting one of the option given below.

The spatial feature of urbanisation in India has been .....

- a) localised
- b) balanced
- c) localised and balanced
- d) neither localised for balanced

- iii) Explain, in four lines, the concept of National Capital Region.

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**4.7 LET US SUM UP**

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In this unit, we have defined urbanisation and taken a historical perspective to understand its patterns in India. We have then examined the spatial, demographic, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of urbanisation in contemporary India. We have also pointed out some of the problems which have arisen as a result of current process of urbanisation in India. Lastly, we have discussed the impact of urbanisation on the rural way of life.

Having looked at various facets of the patterns of urbanisation in India, we may conclude that it has been marked by regional and inter-state diversities, large scale rural to urban migration, insufficient infrastructure facilities, growth of slums and other allied problems. As we mentioned in section 4.6 some steps to solve some of the problems have been taken by the Government of India.

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## 4.8 KEY WORDS

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<b>Demographic</b>	Related to age, sex, density and overall structure of population
<b>Migration</b>	Movement of people either temporarily or permanently from one part of the country to another
<b>Rural-Urban Continuum</b>	A process of socio-economic interaction between the villages and the towns or cities
<b>Urban Density</b>	It refers to the number of people in an urban area per square kilometer
<b>Urbanism</b>	Urban way of life.

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## 4.9 FURTHER READING

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Jayapalan, N. 2002. *Urban Sociology*. Atlantic: New Delhi

Rao, M.S.A.(ed.) 1974. *Urban Sociology in India*. Orient Longman: New Delhi

Saberwal, S. (ed.) 1978. *Process and Institutions in Urban India: Sociological Studies*. Vikas Publishing House: New Delhi

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## 4.10 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- i) In a specific sense urbanisation refers to the movement of people from village to the towns or cities where economic activities are centred around trade, commerce, industry, manufacturing, management and so on.
- ii) a

### Check Your Progress 2

- i) “Shreni” was the caste-based occupational association of traditional Indian towns. This kind of guild formation was an important feature of towns in ancient India.
- ii) a

### Check Your Progress 3

- i) a
- ii) a
- iii) The concept of National Capital Region has been formulated to meet the growth and expansion needs of the capital city of Delhi. For integrated development of Delhi, the region includes 30,000sq. km. of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.