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Rural Urban Migration in India: A Threat To Socio-Economic Sustainability



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Abstract

Rural-Urban migration is one of the important components of growth for Indian urban centers. Every year bulk of migrants from different locations enters in urban areas. Disparity of development between rural and urban areas pushed the rural people towards urban areas. This type of poverty induced rural-urban migration has increased urban poverty, slums, crime inequalities, and exploitation and over all, degradation of urban life in one hand, and on the other hand supply region (Rural Areas) also has failed to upgrade them due to human resource and policy problems. Among all of the migration streams intra-state migration is dominating with a parallel share of female migrants due to marriage but inter-state migration is male dominating and economically motivated. But state wise migration data do not show any direct relationship between economic development of the state and their rural-urban migration. Analysis of the size growth reveals that hierarchy of urban centers and their settlement distribution have become highly skewed over time and imbalance and inequalities reached their highest form within the centers according to their size. Big and metropolitan cities have grown unparallel faster rate. Large groups of landless, unskilled, illiterate people from rural economy leave their home and go to the cities or large towns like Mumbai, Delhi. They do not prefer to go their neighbouring smaller towns because the absorption capacity already ceased to these less diversified economies. Recently globalization has increased such poverty induced rural-urban migration, as the rural household industries are facing crisis and cannot compete with the trend of importing cheap goods.

Every region should develop up to their highest level according to their geographical features and definitely within the periphery of environmental sustainability to reduce the rural urban migration. Growth center concept is no longer a valid solution in our country except some pockets. Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) like planning concept is more relevant today. After developing different connectivity, PURA will develop Circularly Distributed Business District (CDBD) instead of Central Business District (CBD). After sixty seven years of independence we expect some re-direction of planning to achieve a balanced development.

Due to non-availability of 2011 Census migration data this paper is updated up to 2001.

Keywords : Migration, Inequalities , Policies, CDBD, CBD, Development, PURA

Introduction

In economic literature rural-urban migration is viewed favourably in the context of economic development. Internal migration is a natural process in which surplus labour is gradually withdrawn from the rural sector to provide needed manpower for urban industrial growth process. This is deemed socially beneficial because human resources are being shifted from locations where marginal product of labour was assumed to be zero to places where this marginal product is not only positive but also rapidly growing as a result of capital accumulation and technological progress. (Nanavati S.S, 2004). This process was formalized in Lewis theory of development.

In the developed world, the rural-urban migration and urbanization is a vertical shift in the labour force from the agrarian sector to industrial sector. Whereas, in the developing regions as India, migration from rural agricultural sector to urban informal sectors are observed. This is a typical

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manifestation of under-development, poverty and spatial disorganisation of economy of underdeveloped sectors of the society, which arose partially as a result of past colonisation and its adverse consequences on space economy (Mukherjee, 1981).

Indian research and experience have made clear that rate of rural-urban migration is far ahead than the rate of urban job creation and swamped the absorptive capacity of both formal industrial sector and urban service. Large groups of landless, unskilled, illiterate people from rural economy leave their homes and go to the cities or large towns like Mumbai, Delhi. They do not prefer to go their neighbouring smaller towns because the absorption capacity already ceased in these less diversified economies.

Migration can no longer be casually viewed by demographers and economists as a benefit process which is necessary to solve problems of growing urban labour demand. On contrary, migration today is one of the major factor causing urban slum, congestion, under-employment, crime etc. It creates a serious rural and urban structural imbalance in an economy. Researchers think that the hollow growth of Indian urban economy with disproportionate development of tertiary sectors on the small core sector of economy (mainly manufacturing) do not build a strong urban economic base and may collapse any time.

After sixty seven years of independence we expect every region should develop up to their highest level according to their geographical features and definitely within the periphery of environmental sustainability to reduce the rural urban migration.

Growth center concept is no longer a valid solution in our country, except in some pockets. Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) is more relevant today.

The paper is divided into *four* segments. The *first* section deals with the some salient features of India's urbanization relating to rural-urban migration. The *second* section focuses on the estimation of rural-urban migration in the inter-state, intra-state level and their male female differentials. Section *three* tries to identify the problems generating from rural-urban migration in both rural and urban India and section *four* deals with the strategy for balance development highlighting the PURA concept.

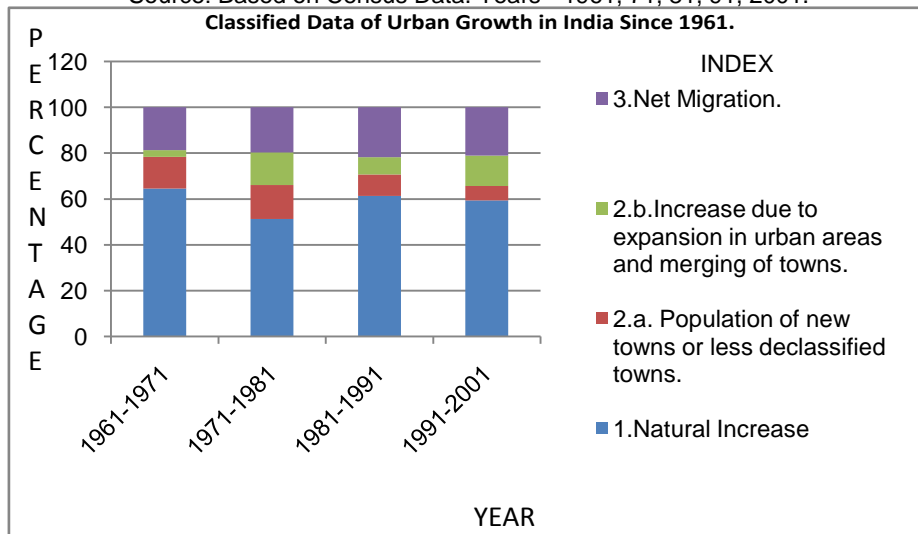
Section – 1.

Let us discuss two important features of Indian urbanisation relating to migration phenomenon based on 2001 Census data because 2011 Census migration data not yet available. Presently 27.78% Indian population are urban dweller (2001). Urban growth is always exceeding the rural growth in most of the developing world. Attempts have been made to explain Rapid City growth in developing countries primarily by two major hypotheses (Williamson, 1988): (1) unusually rapid rates of population growth pressing on limited farm acreage and pushing landless labour into cities and (2) migrants being pulled into the cities by economic forces. Around one-fifth of the urban growth is accounted by rural-urban net migration because everybody knows that the fertility rate is far below in urban areas than rural areas. Following classified data of urban growth will clear the picture. (Table – 1)

Table - 1 Classified Data of Urban Growth in India Since 1961.

Components of Urban Growth	1961-1971	1971-1981	1981-1991	1991-2001
1.Natural Increase	64.6	51.3	61.3	59.4
2.a. Population of new towns or less declassified towns.	13.8	14.8	9.4	6.3
2.b.Increase due to expansion in urban areas and merging of towns.	2.9	14.2	7.6	13.2
3.Net Migration.	18.7	19.7	21.7	21.1

Source: Based on Census Data. Years - 1961, 71, 81, 91, 2001.



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The second serious problem is inherent within 'Top heavy' urban growth in India. Analysis of the size-class growth reveals that hierarchy of urban centers and their settlement distribution have become highly skewed over time and imbalances and inequalities reached their highest form within the urban centers. On other hand, small and medium towns failed to build their economic base.

According to 1901 Census only 26% urban population lived in class one cities where as 47%

urban population were found in class IV, V and VI towns (Table-2). But in 2001, the scenario reversed. 68.6% population were found in class I cities and only 9.3% people lived in class IV, V and VI towns. Rural-Urban migration is much more important in this regard than Urban-Urban migration and any other factors. According to United Nations Development of Economic and Social Affairs, there will be 70 cities in India with a million plus population by 2030.

Table – 2. Number of Towns and Percentage of Population by Size.

Census Year	Number of Towns by Size						% of Urban Population By Size Class					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1901	24	43	130	391	744	479	26.0	11.2	15.6	20.8	20.1	6.1
1911	23	40	135	364	707	485	27.4	10.5	16.4	19.7	19.3	6.5
1921	29	45	145	370	734	571	29.7	10.3	15.9	18.2	18.6	7.0
1931	35	56	183	434	800	509	31.2	11.6	16.8	18.0	17.1	5.2
1941	49	74	242	498	920	407	38.2	11.4	16.3	15.7	15.0	3.1
1951	76	91	327	608	1124	569	44.6	9.9	15.7	13.6	12.9	3.1
1961	102	129	437	719	711	172	51.4	11.2	16.9	12.7	6.8	0.7
1971	148	173	558	827	623	147	57.2	10.9	16.0	10.9	4.4	0.4
1981	218	270	743	1059	758	253	60.3	11.6	14.3	9.5	3.5	0.5
1991	300	345	947	1167	740	197	65.2	10.9	13.1	7.7	2.6	0.3
2001	393	401	1151	1344	888	191	68.6	9.67	12.2	6.8	2.3	0.2

Source: Census of India.

Section – 2.

Now we attempt to estimate the magnitude of rural-urban migration in different states in India. For this, last ten years 'last residence' data are used from two consecutive census reports. i.e, 1991 and 2001.

The total urban population of the country, excluding Jammu and Kashmir, increased from 217.6 million in 1991 to 283.6 million in 2001, registering a growth rate of 30.3 %. At the same time 20.5 million people enumerated in urban areas migrated from rural areas and 6.2 million people migrated from urban to rural areas. So the net migration in urban areas is +14.3. million. Out of the urban growth of 30.3%, 6.6% is accounted for migration to urban areas from rural areas.

Table – 3.

List of Top Ten Indian States Where the Urban Growth is Highly Affected by Rural-Urban Migration (Period – 1991 to 2001.)

Sl No	State	Rural to Urban Migrants and %
1	Mizoram	32555 (39.1%)
2	Meghalaya	10823 (27.4%)
3	Nagaland	13782 (26.8%)
4	Arunachal Pradesh	31984 (26.8%)
5	Gujarat	1420541 (25.9%)
6	Tamil Nadu	8521824 (23.3%)
7	Haryana	339483 (21.9%)
8	Maharashtra	2653862 (21.2%)
9	Karnataka	1033723 (21.2%)
10	Jammu & Kashmir	79163 (21.1%)

Source : Census of India, Migration Tables, 1991 & 2001.

If we analyse the data of 'last residence' of all types of migration streams who migrated towards

the urban centers, then it is clear that 'intra state' rural-urban migrants are dominating because marriage migration contributes a large share and people do not prefer to move to other states where socio-cultural and linguistic heterogeneity exist. But industrially developed states like Gujarat, Maharashtra and West Bengal are exceptions. Table No - 4 highlights the place of last residence and their percentage of different streams.

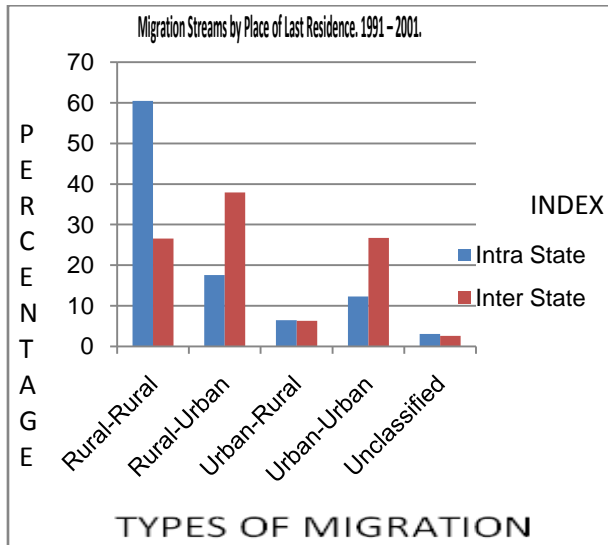
Table – 4.

Migration Streams by Place of Last Residence and Their Male-Female Differentials during 1991 to 2001.

Migration Stream	Persons in %	Male in %	Female in %
Intra State Migrants	100	100	100
Rural-Rural	60.5	41.6	68.6
Rural-Urban	17.6	27.1	13.6
Urban-Rural	6.5	8.6	5.6
Urban-Urban	12.3	18.3	9.7
Unclassified	3.1	4.4	2.6
Inter State Migrants	100	100	100
Rural-Rural	26.6	20.7	32.7
Rural-Urban	37.9	44.7	30.9
Urban-Rural	6.3	6.1	6.4
Urban-Urban	26.7	25.9	27.5
Unclassified	2.6	2.6	2.6
International Migrants.	100	100	100
To Rural Areas	53.0	48.8	57.6
To Urban Areas	47.0	51.2	42.4

Source: Census of India. Migration Table 2001.

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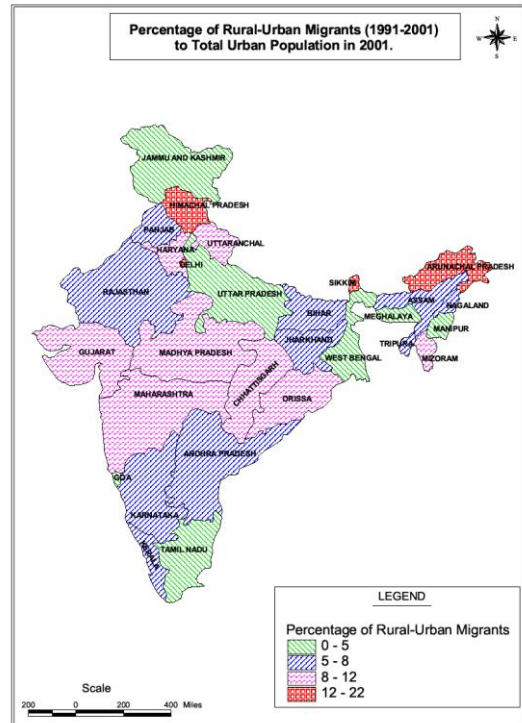
Chennai UA	6.6
Hyderabad UA	8.7
Bangalore UA	13.4
Kolkata UA	6.2

Source: Census of India, Migration Tables – 2001.

For better understanding of the magnitude of migration in urban areas of different states and urban agglomeration, the percentage share of the in-migrants during 1991 to 2001 to total urban population in 2001 is tabulated below.

Table -5.
Rural – Urban Decadal (1991 -2001) Migrants to Total Urban Population in 2001.

States/UA	Percentage of Rural-Urban Migrants (1991-2001) to Total Urban Population in 2001.
Andhra Pradesh	6.72
Arunachal Pradesh	21.52
Assam	7.12
Bihar	5.90
Chhattisgarh	9.64
Gujarat	10.63
Haryana	11.45
Himachal Pradesh	20.30
Jammu & Kashmir	4.64
Jharkhand	6.87
Karnataka	7.03
Kerala	6.99
Madhya Pradesh	9.50
Maharashtra	10.41
Meghalaya	4.20
Mizoram	9.30
Nagaland	7.10
Orissa	10.97
Punjab	7.63
Rajasthan	6.18
Sikkim	20.03
Tamil Nadu	3.34
Tripura	7.71
Utter Pradesh	4.44
Uttaranchal	9.94
West Bengal	4.83
Greater Mumbai UA	15.1
Delhi UA	16.4



On the basis of these urban in-migration data (Table No.-4) some important observations may be made.

Short distance intra- district and intra-state migration dominate among all types of Rural-Urban migration. Considerable large female stream is the part of this migration due to marriage.

Inter state long distance Rural-Urban migration is male dominated and economically motivated.

International migration from three neighbouring countries (Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan) constitutes 96.9% of the total Boarder Cross migration.

No direct relationship is found between the economic development of state and Rural-urban in-migration. Industrially developed states, like Gujarat, Maharashtra and backward eastern states, like Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram both have migration induced urban growth.

Male dominated intra state migration is high in north India compared to southern states.

Section – 3

Undesired rate of rural-urban migration in India creates serious problems in social, economic and demographic contexts. The negative effect is seen in rural areas, cities and towns and even in fringes. Presently economic and social sustainability is challenged everywhere in third world countries. Researchers and even conscious people can identify

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another side of 'so called development'. Our discussion now will continue on those issues separately in rural and urban areas though, this kind of sharp delineation is illogical because both areas are very much interlinked with each other in terms of these particular issues.

Scenario in Rural India

For many years rural India is losing its best brain and muscles. Lack of opportunity in country side pushes the best human resource where the opportunity is available (city region).

Rural poverty is bad enough, but its problems are compounded when families leave their rural homes to search for livelihood in overcrowded city slum, leaving behind deep-rooted traditions and ties to the extended family and the village seniors. This displacement in India is a typical characteristic of urban growth that has outpaced further underdevelopment (Mukherjee S, 2002)

The Indian Planning Commission fixed the target of over 8% growths for Eleventh and Twelve Five Years Plan. Agriculture, the mainstay of villages, cannot grow faster than 2%. So it is inevitable that villages have to be relatively impoverished or it will create massive rural-urban migration.

Recently globalization has increased poverty induced rural-urban migration, as the rural household industries are facing crisis and cannot compete with the trend of importing cheap goods, instead of manufacturing those goods in indigenous units spreading all over the country. Middle or old aged rural workers do not get benefit of liberalization due to their lack of skill in specified modern production sectors and they have been forced towards the periphery of the job market and join the urban informal sectors as rickshaw puller, construction labour, street vendor, beggar etc.

Rural-Urban fringe areas, where future urban growth will occur, are neglected from structural and land use planning. In most cases, when urbanization is completed in these areas the authorities give attention and try to create some development and planning but unfortunately numerous problems like congestion, lack of sanitation, inadequate public sewage disposal system, insufficient space for transport network, pollution etc. are created.

Scenario in Urban Centers

Lots of economic, social and environmental problems have risen due to heavy influx of population. The UN says that if urbanization continues at the present rate, then 46% of the total population i.e, 634 million people, will be in urban region of India by 2030 (UN, 1998). But unfortunately this process of urbanization is accompanied with imbalance in rural-urban and inter-urban areas.

In recent time, most advance economies have become service oriented. It is not surprising that the large cities have varieties of services but traditionally it may have the industrial or manufacturing sector which plays a larger causative role in city size than the service activity does. However, the latter appears to have become

influential controlling factor in metropolitan complexes in advance economies. (David McKee, 1994). Despite such problems these cities progress through economic development where urbanization and economic development are interlinked. Unfortunately, the actual processes of growth and change in third world metropolitan areas have received unexpectedly little attention. 'Cities grow in size as a natural consequence of improvement of agriculture and expansion of industry' (McKee and Leahy, 1974). Dual labour market existed in the urban areas of the third world 'not just between agriculture and manufacturing' (Tisdell, 1990). This duality in urban labour markets may have the potential for impeding development. Whether such an impediment is strictly local in nature or wider in scope depends upon how it impacts the needs of modern sector and how Government priorities must be adjusted to deal with the negative externalities of dualism in an urban location. Neoclassical thinking implies that as surplus labour enters the urban employment market, it must be absorbed if ongoing economic progress is to be achieved (Nanavati S S, 2004). Unfortunately in our country many fledgling urbanities lack the skills needed to function in their new environment; thus their arrival 'merely relocates the slums labour problem in a setting which makes it more difficult to control' (McKee and Leahy, 1974). When urban growth goes along with huge in-migration, the labour absorption issue takes on even more difficult problem.

Big cities, being, linked with the national and global economy, grow with a comparatively good economic base. Percentage of worker in manufacturing sector is greater than other small urban centers. National and foreign investors always prefer these cities. Small and medium urban centers/towns showed a fluctuating demographic as well as economic growth. This provides a basis for the proposition that in India, there exists a dual urban structure wherein the larger cities are integrated with the higher order system and share the growth dynamics at the micro level, which is not the case for the lower order towns (Kundu and Bhatia, 1999)

Socio-economic disparities continued to be high over the period within the Indian cities. Poverty induced rural-urban migration causes lower quality of urbanization. Continuous process of rural-urban migration creates inequality in the city life. Income disparity and disparities in social life increased. Indian urbanization is going on with some basic problems related with housing, slums, water supply, transport, pollution and social services. Mega cities and many million plus cities, using capital and technology intensive investment cannot generate employment as fast as they grow. So overcrowding, congestion, housing crisis, slum population and income disparities come into the front.

NSS data proved that the per capita income is much lower in small or medium urban areas and the percentage of people below poverty line increases systematically as one goes down the population size categories (Dubey and Gangopadhyay, 1999).

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Urban amenities, even basic amenities like water, toilets, electricity etc. are insufficient for all population in Indian- both in small and medium towns. Number of amenities and percentage of household enjoying amenities increase with the size of urban centers.

Now-a-days economic liberalization negatively affects the growth of small and medium towns. Small capital oriented production sectors in the small and medium towns become weaker to compete with big capital sectors and imported goods due to lack of new investment, profit minimization of existing industries.

Local bodies of small towns failed to generate more revenue. So they cannot provide the services to the people and do not build infrastructure properly. Recently private agencies invest their capital with the government (PPP Model) for infrastructural development but unfortunately such investment is big city oriented only.

Policy Redirection?

The planners have started with hopes that once economic growth occurs in the capital intensive urban centers, it followed subsequently by many other changes in the areas of demography, stratification, policy, education and family (Chandrasekhar 1972, Danekar and Rath 1971). But after passing a prolonged time reality speaks some other story. Liberalization (after 1991) and PPP model are geared to growth but imbalance has also increased. So, a strong integrated planning is necessary among the different channels of rural economy which may strengthen the rural economy.

PURA (Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas) was the dream of A.P.J Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, to make India a developed country rapidly. But PURA concept was neither implemented nor tested extensively in the country although it is a good concept for rural planning and a good idea about rural-urban healthy interactions. As an alternative model PURA proposes that urban infrastructure and services be provided in rural hubs to create economic opportunities outside of cities. Physical connectivity by providing roads, electronic connectivity by providing communication network, power connectivity by electric and renewable energy, commercial connectivity by establishing markets, banks, storage and knowledge connectivity by establishing professional and Technical institutions will have to be done in an integrated way so that economic connectivity will emanate.

PURA will be a strip of habitation connected with a ring road about 30-40 K.M in length and connecting at least 30,000 people with fast and frequent public transport. Cluster of these villages will have good connectivity with city regions too. Farms on the one side and a modern transport system on the other would be within walking distance. People will enjoy both benefits, urban-size market and rural ambience. Generating well infrastructure, amenities and empowering human resources with modern knowledge PURA will be the ideal place for

investment. Increasing purchasing capacity will naturally develop a Circularly Distributed Business District (CDBD) unlike Central Business District (CBD). In this way integrated development of farm and non-farm sector in country side will helpful for reducing rural-urban migration for both manual and educated workers. Thus the villages will get double benefit; firstly by retraining talent, they will attract more financial capital and grow faster. Secondly, the better jobs will generate better income which will result in increased consumer demand.

Urban planning requires some redirection towards medium and small towns. Governmental efforts should be given on these towns about amenities development and investment; it may change the skewed growth pattern of urban centers and size-class relationship.

Employment generation through anti-poverty programmes for the poor by the state or local government still remains limited. It is necessary to go on directing the anti-poverty programmes primarily towards the provision of basic amenities. (Kundu, 2001). Rural area based command programme, generating rural market through micro finance and self help programme will be effective in long run if it is implemented properly.

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