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A Review on Urbanization and Rural Development in India

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Abstract

Rural India is undergoing a significant societal shift. Abrupt drops in agricultural employment, local economic restructuring, shifting livelihoods, and the rise of new types of permanent cyclical labour mobility are characteristics of modern urbanisation processes. Urbanisation is a tendency that may be seen in both established and developing countries, and it is an unavoidable byproduct of economic growth and progress. The need for housing, infrastructure, transportation, and other essential services has increased, though, in nations like India where urban populations have grown especially quickly. The origins, difficulties, and societal issues related to India's urbanisation were discussed in this article. Furthermore, the significance, problems, and plans of India's rural development. This article concluded that balanced and inclusive development—integrating technological advancement, infrastructure growth, and community participation—is essential for achieving sustainable urbanization and uplifting rural communities in India.

Keywords; Urbanization, Rural Development, India Social Transformation, Government Scheme.

INTRODUCTION

India's rural areas are undergoing significant change as a result of new urbanisation processes that are characterised by sharp drops in agricultural employment, local economic restructuring, shifting livelihoods, and new types of long-term circular labour movement. Hundreds of millions of people's everyday lives and financial circumstances are changing as a result of this change. We have shown in earlier publications that these urbanising regions have undergone substantial local economic restructuring, along with significant changes in livelihoods [1][2]. Over the past few decades, India has seen considerable increase in urbanisation. An increasing number of individuals are relocating to cities in pursuit of a better living due to the economy's fast growth and the rise in employment prospects. As a result, India's urban population has been growing gradually, with notable increases in recent years. Urbanisation is the process of people moving from rural to urban areas, which causes cities to grow in size and population [3], [4]. It is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has profound effects on both human existence and the environment. There are positive and negative effects of urbanisation on the environment, society, and economy. Since the beginning of civilisation, urbanisation has been happening, and since the industrial revolution, it has intensified. Currently, it is anticipated that over half of the world's population will live in cities. The rapid growth of the population has boosted both the production of goods and services and economic opportunities [5].

Rural transformation is the first step in the process of rural development. The goal of rural development is to expand the advantages of development in rural regions while also improving the social and economic lives of the impoverished in rural areas [6]. In order to raise the standard of living for rural residents, rural development regulates the general growth of rural regions. This makes it a multifaceted term that includes community services and amenities, economic infrastructure, and the growth of agriculture and related activities in the village [7][2].

By creating the ideal rural environment and guiding them towards advancement, rural development aims to address the economic, social, and other issues that are common in rural regions and provide them the chance to live happy lives. According to rural development economics, the primary objective of development is human development in order to raise people's standard of life and means of subsistence [8]. Only when everyone is cooperative and involved in the development process will this be feasible. It is necessary to investigate the origins of rural regions in terms of cultural legacy and their interactions with other rural cultures in order to comprehend the rural transition. This will further emphasise the roots in modern institutions such as land, kinship, and agriculture [9], [10].

Urbanization in India

Urbanisation is the process by which people move from rural to urban regions, the percentage of people who live in rural areas declines, and the manner in which societies adjust to this transition. It may also refer to an increase in the number of people living in cities rather than rural ones. It is primarily the process through which villages and cities develop and expand as increasing numbers of people reside and work in their central regions [11]. India's embrace of a mixed economy following independence led to the growth of the private sector, which in turn caused urbanisation to pick up speed [12]. According to the World Bank, the percentage of Indians living in urban areas increased from 11.4% in the 1901 census to 28.53% in the 2001 census and 34% in 2017. A United Nations poll projects that 40.76% of the nation's population will live in urban areas by 2030. The World Bank predicts that by 2050, India would be the country with the most urban population growth, followed by "China, Indonesia, Nigeria, and the United States".

Causes of Urbanization

Urbanisation is the process of making more people live in cities. The following are some of the causes of India's urbanisation, which is a major worldwide trend that has emerged in recent decades:

- **Industrialization:** One of the main causes of urbanisation is industrialisation. People migrate to cities in search of employment as a result of rising labour demand brought on by more industrialised nations.
- **Work prospects:** Urban areas provide a wealth of employment options, particularly in the industrial and service sectors. Because of this, a lot of people look for greater job opportunities in urban areas.

- **Improved living conditions:** Living circumstances are generally better in cities than in rural locations, with easier access to basic utilities like power, clean water, sanitary facilities, and medical care.
- **Better infrastructure:** Compared to rural areas, cities frequently have better infrastructure, including better roads, public transit, and communication systems. Cities may become more desirable as locations to live as a result.
- **Education:** Urban locations often have easier access to education than rural ones, which might be a major draw for families with kids.
- **Social and cultural chances:** Younger individuals may find a wider variety of social and cultural possibilities, including "access to entertainment and cultural events, in metropolitan areas".

Furthermore, urban growth was both encouraged and driven by the nation's railway network, which made it possible for goods made in one city to be sold throughout the nation. Last but not least, new urban services (electricity, water, transit, etc.) and construction technologies (steel-framed, curtain-walled skyscrapers) supported urban growth [13]. Although it took time, cities gradually became cleaner, healthier, and more densely populated. India is becoming more urbanised for a variety of reasons, such as more work opportunities, improved infrastructure, higher living standards, and easier access to healthcare and education [14]. Cities have more jobs than rural areas, especially in the service and industrial sectors. Cities often provide better living circumstances, including power, clean water, and sanitary facilities. Cities may become more desirable locations to live if they have better roads, public transit, and communication systems [15].

Challenges of Urbanization in India

- **Housing and Infrastructure:** There is a serious lack of affordable housing as a result of rapid urbanisation. Water, power, and sanitary facilities are examples of basic utilities that are frequently insufficient.
- **Traffic and Transportation:** Most cities have serious problems with congestion and ineffective public transit.
- **Environmental Degradation:** Critical issues include garbage mishandling, urban heat islands, and rising pollution levels.

- **Social Inequalities:** Discrimination and restricted access to urban advantages are problems for marginalised communities and slum residents.
- **Governance Issues:** Lack of resources and cooperation between several authorities are common problems in urban government.

The social problems associated with urbanization in India

India's urbanisation has resulted in a number of societal issues, including

- **Social discrimination:** Individuals from certain ethnic groups, religious minorities, and lower castes may experience discrimination in the workplace, housing market, and public service accessibility.
- **Change in the Family System:** India's traditional family structure has changed as a result of urbanisation, with nuclear families becoming more prevalent and extended families becoming less prevalent. Children and elderly adults may not receive the help they need as a result.
- **Ghettoization:** Ghettos, or separated neighbourhoods based on caste, religion, and race, have emerged as a result of urbanisation. For instance, the poorest members of society and those from lower castes are compelled to live in cramped, unmaintained slums like Mumbai's Dharavi.
- **Caste system:** Some groups, especially those from lower castes, have experienced marginalisation and discrimination as a result of the caste system. Due to the influx of individuals from various castes to the cities brought about by urbanisation, the caste system has persisted in urban areas, exacerbating socioeconomic inequalities.
- **Social unrest and crime:** Social instability and criminality have also escalated due to rapid urbanisation. For instance, riots and civil unrest have occurred in places like Delhi as a result of problems like poverty, unemployment, and relocation.
- **Gated Communities:** Additionally, gated communities—to which only a select few, mostly the rich, have access—have emerged as a result of urbanisation. This may worsen social inequality and result in a lack of understanding and integration between various socioeconomic groups.

Importance of Rural Development

Improving rural residents' quality of life is the primary objective of the rural development project. Because so many

Indians reside in rural areas, a rural development plan is crucial. Rural development implies more social change as well as personal economic advancement. Every rural development project and initiative has as its main objective the welfare of millions of people [16]. This has been achieved by concerted efforts to reduce poverty, ignorance, and inequality of opportunity. Currently, a wide range of initiatives have been put in place to lower rural poverty and guarantee that the quality of life for rural inhabitants—especially the impoverished—will improve. In the first phase of planned rural development, the areas of agriculture, health, education, and communication were the main focus [17]. "Health, education, drinking water, housing, and roads" are being given top attention by the Ministry of Rural Development in an effort to enhance the standard of living in rural areas and guarantee that the advantages of economic reform are shared fairly across society. With time and experience, it has become evident that if quick and significant improvement is to be accomplished, public participation is crucial to the success of rural development projects. In order to give rural residents better opportunities for economic growth, public engagement is essential [18].

Issues of the Indian Rural Development

Environmental factors, both economic and noneconomic, impact the core issues facing the rural economy. Economies are impacted by both the local and global settings. The noneconomic environment is composed of the social, natural demographic, physical, and political environments. Commercial markets in India are directly impacted by the economic elements of the rural environment [19]. To expand its value to society, the corporation must understand the needs of the rural environment and adjust to the rural markets. The rural economic environment is a complicated process because of the rural ethics, values, and culture that it encompasses. The following components are part of the government's values being adapted to the rural environment:

- Rural environments are dynamic and complicated strategies.
- It has to do with the loyalty and contentment of rural residents.
- Rural society's evolving mindset.
- Concentrating on ongoing human services.
- Continue to stay abreast of technical advancements.
- High levels of modernisation and technological purification.
- Putting people-friendly policies into action.

- Integration of rural development and growth.

Rural Development Schemes in India

There are four types of rural initiatives. It has been further subdivided into several strategies under each group [7].

Program for Self and Wage Employment

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS): Guaranteeing a Minimum Wage Employees (2006) On February 2, 2006, the Indian government launched the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. The program's objective is to guarantee a minimum of 100 hours of employment at the prevailing minimum wage rate each fiscal year. Individuals aged 18 and older are eligible to participate in this initiative by providing unskilled physical labor. In the last five years, the number of people applying for MGNREGA jobs has nearly quadrupled, rising from 38.91 million in 2017–18 to 63.92 million in 2021–22.

Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY): On April 1, 1999, the Self-Employment Promotion Initiative (also known as the "Swarnajayanti Gramme Swarozgar Yojana," or SGSY) was introduced. It was put into place by the Indian government to give the rural poor of the nation a reliable source of income. As part of the SGSY, self-help groups are established to enable residents to take advantage of opportunities for self-employment in their areas. Self-help organisations consider people's aptitudes and abilities when selecting activities and positions. The SGSY program is funded by banks, charities, and other sources. With an investment of Rs. 14403 Core (US\$2.2 billion), more than 2.25 million Self-Help organisations were founded in India, benefiting over 6.697 million people.

Programs for Rural Infrastructure and Minimum Basic Needs

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY): The main objective of the initiative, which formally began on December 25, 2000, was to give formerly remote rural areas dependable road access. On the plains, about 500 people were able to find steady work. Under the Ministry of Rural Development's authority, the National Rural Roads Development Agency is specifically in charge of the project. 4,22,031 km of roads were connected with this operation, encircling the rural regions that were not connected.

Swajaldhara: At the beginning of the program, which began on December 25, 2002, community-based rural water supply programs were given priority, and reform initiatives

in the rural drinking water supply sector were made available. The neighborhood's active participation is what has allowed this project to endure. While the Spot Source Water Supply Sector Scheme (SSWSS) serves a more constrained region, the Piped Water Spot Source Scheme (PWSS) supplies water to a larger area. The Indian government covers 90% of the scheme's capital costs, with the community contributing the remaining 10%.

Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana: It has long been known that giving people access to basic infrastructure is essential to improving their living conditions and ending poverty. Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve access to housing, clean drinking water, primary education, and basic health care, as seen by coverage expansion and improvements in human development indexes.

Programs for Natural Resource Management

Integrated Watershed Management Program: By restoring and improving once-healthy soil, vegetation, and water sources, the initiative aims to remediate environmental harm. The concept is expected to prevent soil erosion, rejuvenate natural vegetation, collect rainwater, and replenish the aquifer.

Land Reforms and Land Consolidation: Redistributing underutilised land to those who reside in rural regions but do not have access to enough agricultural land is the aim of land reform. The land consolidation system in India lacks centralisation and is characterised by a large number of small, scattered farms. Allocating resources inefficiently results from land consolidation. Thus, this essential structure is required for both required and volunteer programs.

Programs for Social Security

Atal Pension Yojana: Seniors over 60 with modest incomes are eligible for a monthly stipend under this program. This strategy, which mainly targets workers in the unorganised sector, is open to Indian nationals aged 18 to 40 that are citizens of India.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana: Delivering dependable energy to rural regions of India is the goal of the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gramme Jyoti Yojana initiative of the Indian government. The government is proposing to invest an astounding 756 billion dollars in this project to bring power to remote regions. This new initiative will take the place of the previous Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana. Every family in India will have

continuous energy thanks to an initiative started by the NDA administration. After investigating every program, the researcher concludes that women have little opportunity for self-empowerment. This prompted the researcher to consider the MGNREGS, which has had a positive effect on the advancement of rural women.

LITERATURE REVIEW

[20] describes the patterns, causes, difficulties, and effects of urbanisation in India. It also looks at the circumstances that led to the growth of urban sprawl and the "ensuing social, economic, and environmental repercussions". One of the main drivers of migration from rural to urban areas has been the desire for better living circumstances, social mobility, and economic opportunities. Urbanisation has also been greatly aided by towns' and cities' natural population growth. Many individuals have been enticed to cities by the growth of the service sector and the rise of industrial enterprises. Positively, urbanisation has increased access to basic services, improved living conditions, and stimulated economic growth. Slum growth, traffic jams, pollution, and poor infrastructure are just a few of the problems that urbanisation has brought about. India's urbanisation has brought with it both possibilities and pleasures. Since it is an unavoidable process, it briefly offers some policy recommendations from the perspective of urban sociology.

[21] has out a thorough geospatial study including 600,000 communities in order to shed light on the vast geographical patterns of this change. We also gathered original data from two case-study locations in West Bengal and Bihar. Our results show trends towards smaller families, more complicated extended family structures, changing the roles of women in homes, and either a persistence (and potentially widening) of class differences or a disruption of current class systems. These discoveries may be pertinent to the urbanising experiences of other regions of the Global South, and they differ significantly from the assumptions of traditional Western urban theory. Hundreds of millions of people's livelihoods and general well-being are being impacted by this change in India alone.

[22] discover that when it comes to the rise of many measures of development with urbanisation, such as income and human development, India performs better than the majority of countries. Although India's current low levels of urbanisation are partly to blame for these findings, they also show how transformative its cities are in promoting multifaceted development. We examine the income

distributions of major Indian cities to evaluate these changes at a more local level. We look for evidence of significant positive growth in the lowest decile, or poorest, of the population, which would allow for gradual, significant declines in poverty. We also examine the hypothesis that rural migrants are more likely to choose cities that reduce inequality. Lastly, we explicitly characterise changes in poverty rates using income distributions. This indicates that poverty is far lower in India's cities, particularly its biggest ones. Both the endurance of these gains over longer periods of time and their extreme fragility during a crisis are demonstrated by the patterns of poverty rates during the most recent COVID-19 epidemic. India's quickest route to a more wealthy and just future is probably to maintain a long-term dynamic where urbanisation is still strongly linked to human growth and poverty alleviation.

[23] Examine how the Bhopal region and the rural regions that surround it have changed as a result of the several development initiatives and programs put in place throughout the course of five-year plans. The current study is mostly based on micro-level primary data collected in the field. Field surveys, district gazetteers, and other Bhopal-related publications have all provided data and relevant information. The study region's rural development programs and initiatives have improved the standard of living for residents in the study region's communities. Enhancing the level of living and quality of life for people residing in rural regions is the primary objective of rural development projects. The study region's adoption of several development initiatives and programs has contributed to raising the standard of living for rural residents. The respondents' living conditions were also impacted by the research region's urbanisation process; as their income increased, their standard of living changed.

[24] In rural regions, Indian farmers work in agriculture, raising livestock, and other related fields. The rural regions are the legacy of the developing country. As time has gone on, the rural sector has encountered a number of difficulties and has gained attention. Consequently, this has prompted governmental bodies and the succeeding generation to consider the advancement of rural regions. Rural poverty will keep the nation impoverished. Both primary and secondary data are used in this study, which aims to produce a green and sustainable rural development. Journals, reports, and websites have been the sources of secondary data. The village's rural residents have provided primary data. To examine the practical approach to rural development, three communities have been chosen. Two concepts for remote

areas Mahsar village in Bihar has been chosen as an example of an underdeveloped rural area, whereas Ralegaon Siddhi and Hivare Bazaar in Maharashtra have been chosen as instances of sustainable rural development. The study evaluates the rural model's efforts and contrasts them with those of an underdeveloped rural town.

[25] Study to comprehend India's rural development's function, significance, problems, and government measures. The administration has realised that they must use their resources to assist a strategic shift taking place in the economic environment. Economic development is an all-encompassing approach that facilitates the seamless integration of every aspect of rural society. Leveraging the transformative potential of the internet, economic expansion influences individuals' existences and integrates people, procedures, and technological advancements. As it strives for the highest rate of growth, the government faces tremendous challenges in today's intensely competitive market. Economic growth will be effective if government activities are planned and executed in line with environmental changes.

[26] The vast majority of rural communities in India are plagued by several issues that are impeding their growth. This research paper's primary goal is to examine and comprehend the issues and difficulties that rural communities face, as well as to talk about and explain the causes of these issues. People's living situations are negatively impacted by these issues, which also act as a roadblock to advancement. The causes of rural regions' backwardness are explained by this research, which also points out the necessity of strengthening the rural system for the nation's overall development and the steps that the government should take to enhance people's quality of life.

[27] examines the expansion of Indian cities generally, with particular attention to the shift in the proportion of the people living in cities since 1950. In order to analyse urbanisation trends, their varied repercussions, and the obstacles that urban living presents, the research uses secondary data and basic statistical techniques. The report also provides legislative recommendations to integrate sustainability into urban planning procedures and describes tactics to support safe, inclusive, and sustainable urban environments. As a nation advances towards greater economic prosperity, urbanisation is an unavoidable consequence. However, it also presents a number of difficulties, such as a rise in the need for housing, transportation, and infrastructure. The growth of congested slums, which are frequently marked by poor drinking water

and sanitation, has resulted from the migration of impoverished migrants into large cities. This puts tremendous strain on the environment. Rapid urbanisation has socioeconomic ramifications as well, which contribute to unsustainable urban expansion. Therefore, it becomes necessary to implement environmentally friendly policies in order to facilitate more sustainable urban growth.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To study the urbanization and rural development in India.
2. To study the causes, challenges and social problems associated with urbanization in India.
3. To study the importance, issues and schemes of rural development in India.
4. To study the various researcher's perspective on urbanization and rural development in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This review paper adopts a systematic literature review approach to examine the dynamics of urbanization and rural development in India. Relevant peer-reviewed articles, government reports, and policy documents published between 2000 and 2024 were collected using databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Studies were screened based on relevance, credibility, and thematic alignment. A thematic analysis was conducted to synthesize insights on migration trends, infrastructure development, socio-economic impacts, and policy interventions shaping India's urban-rural transformation.

CONCLUSION

Urbanization in India is accelerating rapidly due to globalization, industrialization, and expanding economic opportunities, causing profound transformations in both urban and rural regions. While cities attract migrants seeking better employment, housing, education, and healthcare, the challenges of urban poverty and inadequate infrastructure persist. This review highlights that effective urban management requires parallel strengthening of rural development to reduce excessive migration pressure. Rural India is undergoing significant socio-economic shifts, with rising non-agricultural employment, improved housing conditions, enhanced mobility, and greater access to basic amenities. Government initiatives such as MGNREGS, PMGSY, and DDUGJY are instrumental in improving livelihoods, connectivity, and social security. However, gaps remain in awareness, education, health, and sanitation, underscoring the need for better outreach and digital governance through platforms like Aadhaar-enabled

services. Overall, balanced and inclusive development—integrating technological advancement, infrastructure growth, and community participation is essential for achieving sustainable urbanization and uplifting rural communities in India.

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