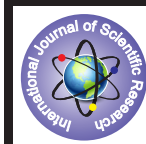


# The Trends in Urbanisation in the North East India : Its Implications to the Regional Economy



## ECONOMICS

**KEYWORDS :** Urbanization, Trend, Growth rate of Population, Sex-ratio, Rural urban Population, Poverty, Policy implication.

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### ABSTRACT

*Urbanization is the most significant phenomenon of the 20th century which has affected all aspect of national life in India. The process of urbanization in India has been largely city oriented. The increasing concentration of population in cities has been the striking features of India's urbanization during the last century (Bhagat, 2004). The rapid growth of urbanization in North East India has serious consequences on the economy of the region. The undue concentration of population in most of the towns in North Eastern States results in a number of problems for the inhabitants of the towns. This paper makes an attempt to study the trends in urbanization in the North East India and its economic implications.*

### Introduction

Urbanization is the most significant phenomenon of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century which has affected all aspects of national life in India. Being the second most populous country in the world after China, India's fast growing urbanization has a regional as well as world wide impact. There has been a rapid trend towards urbanization in India particularly after independence in spite of the predominant rural nature of our economy. The growth of urban population has been so galloping during the last few decades that it may be considered as an urban explosion. Rapid growth of population in urban areas is a matter of great concern and its consequences are even far more serious. The present paper makes an attempt to study the trends in urbanization in north east India and its economic implication.

### Concept of Urbanization

Urbanization refers to the process of rise in urbans population. It is an index of transfer of nation from traditional rural economy to modern industrial one. It is progressive concentration of population in urban unit (Davis, 1965). Kingsley Davis has explained urbanization as a process of switch from spread out pattern of human settlements to one of concentration in urban centres (Davis, 1962). According to Trewartha (1969) urbanization is a cyclical process through which the nations pass as they evolve from agrarian to industrial societies. It implies positive correlation between the degree of industrialization and urbanization. The concept of urbanization is in the stage of evolution throughout the world & more so in developing countries like India (Mallic, 1981). Hagget (1975) points out that urbanization in developing countries like India differs from that in developed countries. In these countries urbanization had a late starts and it has been very rapid. The growth rate of urban population in backward states has accelerated as compared to advanced states (Mohan R and Chandrasekhar, 1982). While urbanization of developed countries has been mostly the product of rural urban migration the urbanization of developing countries has been equally the result of population explosion with rural urban migration.

The definition of an urban area changes from country to country and there is no uniform standards. Most commonly, a city is generally defined as a political unit organized and governed by an administrative body. The most accepted criterion of urbanization is typically population size, density of population and the extent of the built up area.

In 2001 census the urban centers have been categorized on the following criteria –

The Places having a minimum population of 5000.

75% of the male working population engaged in the activities other then agriculture.

Recombination of UN the census of India classified its urban places into 6 categories as follows :

- Class I cities having a population of lakh or more.
- Class II Cities having population of 50,000-99,999.
- Class III Cities having population of 20,000-49,999.
- Class IV Cities having population of 10,000-19,999.
- Class V Cities having population of 5000-9999.
- Class VI Cities having population of less than 5000.

**Objectives of the Study :** Following are the major objectives of the study.

- To study the trends in urbanization in India in general and of North East India in particular and
- To study the economic implications of Urbanization in North East India.

### Findings :

#### Urbanization in India :

Distribution of Urban Population by Size Classes :  
Despite a long tradition of urbanization, India was at a low level of urbanization in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century with only one tenth of its population residing in urban areas. It was around one sixth at the time of independence. In the 2001 census 27.7 percent of its total population lived in urban areas.

An analysis of the distribution of urban population reveals that the process of Urbanization in India population being concentrated in class I cities, which has gone up systematically over the decades in the last century. There has been a massive increase in the percentage share of class I cities from 51.42 in 1961 to 68.7 in 2001. The basic reason for the increasing dominance of these cities is graduations of lower order towns into class-I category (Kundu, 2003).

The increasing concentration of population of cities that too in large cities has been the striking features of India's urbanization during the last century (Bhagat, 2004).

Urbanization is crucially linked to migration. A person is defined an migrant if the place in which he is enumerated during the census is other than he place of immediate last resident.

Population Migrants Classified based on place of Last Residence in 2001 and growth rate during 1991-2001, India

| Migrants               | 2001 (In million) | Percentage Distribution 2001 | Growth Rate (Percentage) |          |            |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|------------|
|                        |                   |                              | 1971-81*                 | 1981-91* | 1991-2001* |
| Intra-district         | 193.5             | 61.6                         | 24.9                     | 8.3      | 37.0       |
| Inter-district         | 74.6              | 23.7                         | 44.3                     | 13.7     | 26.3       |
| Inter-State            | 41.1              | 13.1                         | 28.1                     | 11.7     | 53.6       |
| International Migrants | 5.1               | 1.6                          | -9.1                     | -6.1     | -13.4      |
| All migrants           | 314.3             | 100.0                        | 27.0                     | 9.8      | 34.7       |
| Total Population       | 1028.6            | -                            | 24.7                     | 23.7     | 21.4       |

Source : census of India 2001.

The intra district and inter district movement comprises largest share of migration i.e. 61.6 percent and 23.7 percent respectively. Inter state migration and international immigration comprises less share of migration i.e. 13.1% and 5.1% respectively. It has been observed from the table that the growth rates of migrants declined from 27 percent during 1971-81 to 9.8 percent in 1981-91, but accelerated to 34.7% during 1991-2001. One of the remarkable features of all types of internal migration is that it is dominated by women. This is because women move to their husband's place of residence after marriage (Bhagat, 2005)

### 3.2 TRENDS IN URBANIZATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NORTH EAST :

The regional variations in the distribution of urban population are significant. A large proportion is concentrated in six most developed states, namely, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Punjab and West Bengal, accounting for about half of the country's urban population. In 2001 census, these cities reported a percentage of urban population much above the national average of 27.78 whereas the less developed states report significantly low figures. Thus, the level of urbanization in the states with high per capita income is high and vice versa. These states attracted population in urban areas due to industrialization and infrastructure investment (Kundu, 2006).

**Table No. 2 : Pattern of Urbanization and Growth of Urban Population Across States/UTS:**

| States/UTs           | Percentage of Urban population |       |       |       | Annual exponential growth rate |         |           |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------------------------|---------|-----------|
|                      | 1971                           | 1981  | 1991  | 2001  | 1971-81                        | 1981-91 | 1991-2001 |
| Andhra Pradesh       | 19.31                          | 23.25 | 26.84 | 27.08 | 3.94                           | 3.55    | 1.37      |
| Arunachal Pradesh    | 3.70                           | 6.32  | 12.21 | 20.41 | 8.32                           | 9.28    | 7.00      |
| Assam                | 8.82                           | 9.88  | 11.09 | 12.72 | 3.29                           | 3.29    | 3.09      |
| Bihar                | 10.00                          | 12.46 | 13.17 | 10.47 | 4.34                           | 2.65    | 2.57      |
| Chattisgarh          | NA                             |       |       | 20.08 |                                |         | 3.09      |
| Delhi                | 89.70                          | 92.84 | 89.93 | 93.01 | 4.56                           | 3.79    | 4.14      |
| Goa                  | 26.44                          | 32.46 | 41.02 | 49.77 | 4.37                           | 3.96    | 3.32      |
| Gujarat              | 28.08                          | 31.08 | 34.40 | 37.36 | 3.42                           | 2.90    | 2.8       |
| Haryana              | 17.66                          | 21.9  | 24.79 | 29.00 | 4.65                           | 3.58    | 4.00      |
| Himachal Pradesh     | 6.99                           | 7.72  | 8.70  | 9.79  | 3.02                           | 3.11    | 2.81      |
| Jammu, Kashmir       | 18.59                          | 21.05 | 22.76 | 24.88 | 3.80                           | 3.44    | 3.44      |
| Jharkhand            | NA                             |       |       | 22.25 |                                |         | 2.55      |
| Karnataka            | 24.31                          | 28.91 | 30.91 | 33.98 | 4.08                           | 2.55    | 2.53      |
| Kerala               | 16.24                          | 18.78 | 26.44 | 25.97 | 3.19                           | 4.76    | 0.74      |
| Madhya Pradesh       | 16.29                          | 20.31 | 23.21 | 26.67 | 4.46                           | 3.71    | 2.71      |
| Maharashtra          | 31.17                          | 35.03 | 38.73 | 42.4  | 3.35                           | 3.27    | 1.21      |
| Manipur              | 13.19                          | 26.44 | 27.69 | 23.38 | 9.70                           | 2.98    | 1.21      |
| Meghalaya            | 14.55                          | 18.03 | 18.69 | 19.63 | 4.87                           | 3.10    | 3.16      |
| Mizoram              | 11.36                          | 25.17 | 46.2  | 49.5  | 11.79                          | 9.57    | 3.27      |
| Nagaland             | 9.95                           | 15.54 | 17.28 | 17.74 | 8.49                           | 5.58    | 5.27      |
| Orissa               | 8.41                           | 11.82 | 13.43 | 14.97 | 5.21                           | 3.08    | 2.61      |
| Punjab               | 23.73                          | 27.72 | 29.72 | 33.55 | 3.62                           | 2.55    | 3.19      |
| Rajasthan            | 17.63                          | 20.93 | 22.88 | 23.38 | 4.52                           | 3.31    | 2.71      |
| Sikkim               | 9.37                           | 16.23 | 9.12  | 11.1  | 9.55                           | 3.23    | 4.83      |
| Tamil Nadu           | 30.26                          | 32.98 | 34.2  | 43.86 | 2.45                           | 1.79    | 3.56      |
| Tripura              | 10.43                          | 10.98 | 15.26 | 17.02 | 3.26                           | 6.19    | 2.53      |
| Uttar Pradesh        | 14.02                          | 18.01 | 19.89 | 20.78 | 4.78                           | 3.27    | 2.84      |
| Uttaranchal          | NA                             |       |       | 25.59 |                                |         | 2.84      |
| West Bengal          | 24.75                          | 26.49 | 27.39 | 28.03 | 2.75                           | 2.54    | 1.84      |
| Union Territories    |                                |       |       |       |                                |         |           |
| Andaman, Nicobar     | 22.77                          | 26.36 | 26.8  | 32.87 | 6.38                           | 4.10    | 4.40      |
| Chandigarh           | 90.55                          | 93.6  | 89.69 | 89.78 | 5.92                           | 3.07    | 3.40      |
| Dadara, Nagar Haveli | 0                              | 6.67  | 8.47  | 22.89 | -                              | 5.28    | 14.59     |
| Daman and Diu        | -                              | -     | 46.86 | 36.26 | -                              | 4.93    | 1.87      |
| Lakshadweep          | 0                              | 46.31 | 56.29 | 44.47 | -                              | 4.46    | -0.77     |
| Pondichery           | 42.04                          | 52.32 | 64.05 | 66.57 | 4.66                           | 4.92    | 0.39      |
| All India            | 20.22                          | 23.73 | 25.72 | 27.78 | 3.79                           | 3.09    | 2.73      |

Source : Population Census, Paper 2, 1981, 1991 and 2001

**Table No. 3**  
**Growth Rate of Population (in %)**

|       | 1991-2001 | 2001-2011 | Difference |
|-------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| India | 21.5      | 17.6      | -3.9       |
| Rural | 18.1      | 12.2      | -5.9       |
| Urban | 31.5      | 31.8      | +0.3       |

The slowing down of the overall growth rate of population is due to the sharp decline in the growth rate in rural areas, while the growth rate in urban areas remains almost the same.

**Table No. 4**  
**Sex Ratio**

|           | 2001 | 2011 | Difference |
|-----------|------|------|------------|
| Overall   |      |      |            |
| India     | 933  | 940  | +7         |
| Rural     | 946  | 947  | +1         |
| Urban     | 900  | 926  | +26        |
| 0-6 years |      |      |            |
| India     | 927  | 914  | -13        |
| Rural     | 934  | 919  | -15        |
| Urban     | 906  | 902  | -4         |

- The improvement in overall sex ratio is largely in urban areas
- Though the Urban Child sex ratio is far worse than in the rural areas, the fall in Child sex ratio in rural areas is around 4 times that in urban areas. In fact the decline is more gradual in urban areas.

**Table No. 5**  
**Growth Rate of Population (in %)**

|         | 1991-2001 | 2001-2011 | Difference |
|---------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| EAG     | 25.0      | 20.9      | -4.1       |
| Rural   | 23.5      | 18.7      | -4.8       |
| Urban   | 31.6      | 29.9      | -1.7       |
| Non EAG | 18.9      | 15.0      | -3.9       |
| Rural   | 13.2      | 5.7       | -7.5       |
| Urban   | 31.5      | 32.7      | +1.2       |

- The improvement in overall sex ratio is largely in urban areas
- Though the Urban Child sex ratio is far worse than in the rural areas, the fall in Child sex ratio in rural areas is around 4 times that in urban areas. In fact the decline is more gradual in urban areas.
- There is a decline of 8.9 million children in Rural areas, while in Urban areas has shown increase of 3.9 million.

**Table No. 6**  
**Number of Urban Units – India**

- Towns:
  - Census 2001 5,161
  - Census 2011 7,935 Increase: 2,774
- Statutory Towns:
  - Census 2001 3,799
  - Census 2011 4,041 Increase: 242
- Census Towns:
  - Census 2001 1,362
  - Census 2011 3,894 Increase: 2,532

**Table No. 7**  
**Population by Rural Urban Residence – India - 2011**

Persons:

- Total : 1,210,193,422
- Rural: 833,087,662
- Urban: 377,105,760

Rural Urban Distribution Persons (in %):

- Total : 100.0 %
- Rural: 68.84 %
- Urban: 31.16 %

Source: Census 2011 – Provisional Population Totals - India

**Table No. 8**  
**Urban Population in States@**

| Top Three States:    | Absolute     | Share*     |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|
| • Maharashtra        | 50.8 million | 13.5%      |
| • Uttar Pradesh      | 44.4 million | 11.8%      |
| • Tamil Nadu         | 34.9 million | 9.3%       |
| Bottom Three States: |              |            |
| • Sikkim             | 0.15 million | Negligible |
| • Arunachal Pradesh  | 0.31 million | 0.1%       |
| • Mizoram            | 0.56 million | 0.1%       |

Note: \* - Share to total Urban Population in the country.  
@ - Excludes UTs.

Source: Census 2011 – Provisional Population Totals - India

High Urban growth has been registered in relative by underdeveloped states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh the states that have low percentages of urban population. From the table it is observed that Goa has the highest percentage of urban population except the union territories and Himachal Pradesh recorded a lower percentage of urban population followed by Assam, Bihar and Sikkim, Urban Scenario in the post independence period has been characterized by dualism. Both developed and less developed states experienced rapid urban growth.

If we observe the trend of urbanization in North Eastern states (Table 3) we see that Mizoram has the highest percentage of urban population (49.5) followed by Manipur (23.9) Arunachal Pradesh (20.41) Meghalaya (19.63), Nagaland (17.74), Tripura (17.02) and Assam has the lowest percentage of urban population followed by Sikkim (11.1) percent in 2001.

**Table No. 9 : Percentage of Urban Population in North East During 1991-2011.**

| Year | A.P.  | Assam | Manipur | Meghalaya | Mizoram | Nagaland | Sikkim | Tripura | NER   |
|------|-------|-------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|--------|---------|-------|
| 1991 | 12.80 | 11.10 | 27.52   | 18.50     | 46.10   | 17.21    | 10.01  | 15.30   | 13.78 |
| 2001 | 20.34 | 12.72 | 24.12   | 19.63     | 49.50   | 17.74    | 11.10  | 17.02   | 15.47 |

Source : Census of India 1991, 2001

### 3.3 TREND OF URBANIZATION IN ASSAM :

**Table No10: Trend of Urbanization in Assam : 1901-2001**

| Census Year | Percentage Urban Population India | Assam | Decadal Growth rate of Urban Population |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------|---|
| 1901        | 10.84                             | 2.34  | -                                       |
| 1911        | 10.29                             | 2.41  | 20.5                                    |
| 1921        | 11.18                             | 2.74  | 36.8                                    |
| 1931        | 11.99                             | 2.92  | 27.58                                   |
| 1941        | 13.83                             | 3.11  | 28.30                                   |
| 1951        | 17.29                             | 4.29  | 65.73                                   |
| 1961        | 17.97                             | 7.21  | 126.57                                  |
| 1971        | 19.91                             | 8.82  | 65.01                                   |
| 1981        | 23.34                             | -     | -                                       |
| 1991        | 26.73                             | 11.10 | *92.97                                  |
| 2001        | 27.80                             | 12.90 | 36.22                                   |

Note : \* The figure shows growth rate during 1971-91

Source : Census of India

Important phenomenon. The contribution of the urban sector to the Indian economy rose to 47% in 1980-81 as against 20% in 1950-51 although all the north eastern states are primarily agricultural states, with the growth of urban areas, the contribution of primarily sector starts declining with the increase in the contribution of service sectors.

### 2) Income growth :

The growth of employment in urban areas has been higher than over all employment in the country. Growth rate of employment during 1977-78 to 1987-88 averaged at about 4% per annum while the growth rate of employment in the rural areas was less than 1% per annum. The Task Force on urban development had estimated that urban income exceed rural by 182 percent in 1980-81. The structural change of economy (GOI 1983) has further widened disparities in per capita rural urban income. The urban labour market is undergoing rapid changes as most of the opportunities are coming from self employed and informal sector.

### 3) Poverty :

While the available evidence points out on overall improvements in the income of the urban people the incidence of poverty in urban areas has been a quite disturbing phenomenon. About 32.36% of total urban population live in urban condition of absolute poverty.

Evidence shows that other manifestation of poverty in terms of access to housing and basic services is equally serious. In 1991, nearly 18.6% of persons in urban areas were without access to safe drinking water & 30.1% without any form of basic sanitation. Housing deficit in urban areas particularly in the class I

cities in the North East is much more severe for economically weaker sections of population. According to an estimate, as much as 30% of the total urban population do not have access to basic urban services, such as safe drinking water & sanitation, land, affordable shelter, security of tenure and transport. The majority of poor get accommodated in slums and informal settlements.

### 4) Growth of Urban informal sector :

The informal sector continues to play an important role in providing employment opportunity. The most of the cities reflect the typical range of informal sector employment share from about 30% to 70%. These usually self employed workers in this sector have little formal education are generally unskilled and lack access to financial capital. Informal sector incomes have remained in rural regions despite continued flow of rural urban migration.

The rural urban migration disproportionately increase the growth rate of urban job seekers. On the other hand urban job creation is generally more difficult and costly. This will create a short run problem of resource imbalance into a long run situation of chronic and rising urban surplus labour.

### 3.4 Conclusion :

The size class distribution of urban population and their growth rates over the decade and the interstate variation in the levels and growth in urban population highlights that there was a sharp fall in the rate of urbanization during 1991-2001 which indicates deceleration in population mobility in the country. This trend reveals that men have become less mobile over the past few decades than women. An important features of urbanization in India and in the NER is dualism i.e. urban growth at macro level is decelerating but in class - I cities it is growing. The process of urbanization in India has been large by city oriented with high percentage of urban population being concentrated in class-I cities with highly of a dual urban structure is reflected in the fact that many of these cities are not able to attract investors from the national and world market.

The cities and towns are facing challenges of meeting the conflicting goals of catering to the demands of global capital market on the one hand and for providing access to employment, land and basic amenities to the local population on the other.

The under concentration of population in most of the towns in North-Eastern region results in a number of problems for the inhabitants of the towns. Therefore it is suggested that the future of these urban units lie in the management of huge population through the creation of job opportunities, removal of slums and providing adequate amenities to the inhabitants through proper environmental improvement.

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