
URBAN TRANSFORMATION - SMART CITIES
Is Smart Cities Mission a solution to the Problems of Urbanization

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Abstract

Urbanisation is a wide concept which includes development in several aspects in an economy. Despite the predominant rural nature of the Indian economy, there has been a remarkable and fast trend towards Urbanisation. The development implies to social and economic advantages such as better education, health care, sanitation, housing, business & employment opportunities, entertainment, transportation etc. Urbanisation is basically a virtue to an economy. Nevertheless, this massive Urban transformation results in few adverse effects which consequently appear as challenges. Thus, resolving the problems of Urbanisation becomes a matter of concern. This paper aims to analyse the major causes and effects of Urbanisation thereby making out the solutions to fix them through "Smart Cities Mission". The elements and features of Smart cities mission are merely the solutions to the problems of Urbanisation.

KEYWORDS: Urbanisation, Urban Transformation, Smart cities, Retrofitting, Redevelop

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted to present this paper is secondary data acquired from various books and journals. The statistical data is obtained from several sources through internet.

An informal interview with an urban planner gave me an understanding of city and town planning, housing and smart cities agenda.

OBJECTIVES

1. This study examines the major causes behind rapid urbanisation since independence.
2. It aims to enlighten the problems of urbanisation
3. It analyses how Smart cities mission plays vital role in resolving those problems.

SCOPE

This study examines the problems of urbanisation throughout the economy, but for empirical elucidation, the scope is confined to a single city Visakhapatnam. Thus, the content revolves around the problems due to urbanisation in the city and plans, developments that had taken place so far under Smart cities mission.

INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION: Urbanisation can be merely defined as a process whereby population move from rural to urban areas enabling cities and towns to grow.

Thus, an urban area has been defined as per the given criteria

(a) all places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee.

(b) (i) a minimum population of 5000

(ii) at least 75% of male working population engaged in non- agricultural pursuits and

(iii) a density of population of at least 400 persons per sq.km

Urban transformation is very common in developing and developed countries as more and more people have the tendency of moving closer to towns and cities to acquire privileged social and economic advantages such as better education, health care, sanitation, housing, transportation etc.

Economic development is generally associated with urban transformation. But the picture of urbanisation is not as glorious as it apparently seems. Increase in the number of people who live in cities and towns turns into a burden on existing resources to meet the increasing ends of the population. This scenario tremendously affects the sustainability which leads to problematic situations both economically and socially. Hence, it is a challenge for the government to lift the economy out of those problems while striving to achieve economic development simultaneously.

URBANISATION IN INDIA

As a developing country, Ever since Independence, India has been recording an Increasing trend towards Urbanisation. Industrialisation in India played a crucial role among the causes of rapid urban transformation. The census of India data, based on rural- urban composition reveals a continuous rise in the rate of Urbanisation, particularly from 1991. The features of 1991 Industrial revolution gave rise to establishment of numerous industries thereby enabling those respective towns and cities to urbanise.

Trends in Rural- urban population in India

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION IN MILLIONS	RURAL POPULATION IN MILLIONS	URBAN POPULATION IN MILLIONS	YEARLY INCREASE IN URBAN POPULATION IN MILLIONS	TOTAL NO. OF CITIES AND TOWNS	YEARLY INCREASE IN NO. OF TOWNS AND CITIES
1951	361.1	298.7	62.4	-	3035	-
1961	439.2	360.3	78.9	16.5	2657	-378
1971	548.2	439.1	109.1	30.2	3081	424
1981	685.2	525.7	159.5	50.4	3891	810
1991*	844.3	627.1	217.2	57.7	4615	724
2001*	1027.0	742.0	285.2	68.0	5161	546
2011*	1210.2	833.3	377.1	91.9	7935	2774

Source: Census of India 1951- 2011

*excluding Jammu and Kashmir from 1951 to 1991 and Assam for 1981

The above table gives a precise view of growing trends in Urbanisation in India. If observed, the urban population over years shows a progressive trend compared to its preceding year. From 1951 to 1981, pace of urbanisation was slow. The yearly increase in the urban population was minimal ranging between 16.5millions to 50.4millions. Taking from 1991, there is a significant increase in urban population recording 57.7, 68.0, 91.9millions respectively. If the total number of towns&cities is observed, there are fluctuations in the yearly increase. But it is noted that there is an enormous increase recorded during 2011 with a total number of 2774.

CAUSES OF RAPID URBANISATION

Rapid urbanisation in an economy can be attributed to many causes.

- Industrial Revolution is one of the key causes which enabled rural population to move to urban areas. Industrialisation has increased employment opportunities by giving people the openings to work in modernised societies.
- Commercialisation plays a major role in urban transformation. The distribution of goods and services and commercial transactions in the modern era has developed modern marketing institutions and exchange methods that have tremendously given rise to the growth of towns and cities.
- Migration is basic reason for the increase of urban population. The cause for migration might differ in the case of individuals. Be it social benefits and services like education, sanitation & housing, better standard of living. On account of this, more and more people are prompted to migrate to cities and towns.
- Wide range of employment opportunities in urban areas tend to attract rural population to access well paying jobs in all developing sectors such as public health, education, transport, entertainment, business opportunities etc.
- Religious causes are also responsible for urbanisation in a particular region. Pilgrim centres enable that particular area to develop self- employment, transport, housing etc and hence stimulating urban transformation.
- Rural urban transformation occurs when industries are set up in the rural areas or city outskirts due to availability of resources. Due to this reason, there is a necessity to develop transport networks, communications, electricity, banking facilities, better governance etc. Thus, rural communities adopt urban culture and ultimately become urban centres.

PROBLEMS OF URBANISATION

Urbanisation has positive implications on the economy when it occurs within appropriate limits. But, extensive Urbanisation results in drastic effects.

- Increased population leads to housing problems. Scarcity of houses is due to insufficient expansion space and public utilities, poverty, expensive construction materials etc. which could be afforded by few individuals.
- Although employment is the main cause behind urbanisation, extreme urbanisation leads to a situation where every individual cannot seek job. Existing employment opportunities give employment to few while the other half remain unemployed. Thus, educated unemployment and under employment prevails.
- The density of population increases when cities and towns are overcrowded. Huge number of people dwelling in a small area leads to congestion.
- The cost of living in urban areas is very high. Hence, it results in unlawful resident settlements which represent slums and squatters. The growth of slums and squatters in urban areas is even further exacerbated by unemployment.
- Due to educated unemployment, the wage rate decreases and consequently, the income levels come down.
- Congestion and over crowdedness in the urban areas leads to health and sanitation problems. Due to bad sewage management, there is scope for spreading of contagious diseases.
- Increasing population is a burden to the government as the resources required to meet their ends are scarce. Therefore, problems in water supply, electricity, transport etc. arise.

Resolving these problems while sustaining the resources is a challenge to the Government. Under these circumstances, Smart cities mission is expected to present solutions to these problems.

SMART CITIES MISSION

Smart cities mission of the government is a bold, new initiative. It is meant to set examples that can be replicated both within and outside the smart city, catalysing the creation of smart cities in various parts of the country.

The conceptualization of smart city varies from city to city depending on the level of development, resources, need for redevelopment etc. In the approach of smart cities mission, the objective is to promote cities that provide core infrastructure, a clean and sustainable environment and application of smart solutions. The core elements in a smart city would include:

1. Adequate water supply
2. Assured electricity supply
3. Sanitation and solid waste management
4. Efficient urban mobility and public transport
5. Affordable and well-planned housing, especially for the poor
6. Robust IT connectivity & digitalization
7. Good governance, emphasizing E- governance and citizen participation
8. Sustainable environment
9. Health and education
10. Safety and security of citizens

It is perceived that the above-mentioned elements are merely the solutions to the problems of rapid urbanization. Thus, implementation of these programs would minimize the problems of urbanisation.

If our study area is concerned, Visakhapatnam's urban population shows a noticeable progress pre-industrial policy and post-industrial policy.

YEAR	URBAN POPULATION
1971	20.30millions
2011	47.45millions

Source: census of India-1971 and 2011

Taking from 2011, the population still recorded an increasing trend. The reasons are attributed to education and employment mainly while women migrating after marriage is also given as a reason.

Population in Visakhapatnam

YEAR	POPULATION IN MILLIONS
2013	2.4
2014	2.8
2015	3.1
2016	3.5
2017	3.78

Source: population of Visakhapatnam, <http://indiapopulation.in>

Therefore, Visakhapatnam is a city where urbanisation and its problems are positively related. Nonetheless, the Government has been striving to resolve these problems with certain proposals under Smart cities mission.

Implementation of Smart city projects in Visakhapatnam

S.NO	NAME OF THE PROGRAM	COST IN CRORES
1	Housing for all (1130)	54.24
2	Beach beautification	240
3	Retrofitting of 6 selected GVMC schools	5.50
4	Fixing of LED lights throughout the city	150
5	Underground wiring system	250
6	Fly-over path near NAD	150
7	Inculcating job skills in graduates and under graduates under APSSDC program	na
8	Sewage and covering of sewer line	5
9	Public toilets/ solar roof top	6.40
10	Landscaping and tree plantation	95.69
11	Pipelines and water supply	26.31

Source: smart cities mission, <http://smartcities.gov.in>,

Ministry of housing and urban affairs

The above-mentioned programs are the projects that have been implemented so far in Visakhapatnam. If examined keenly, the problems aroused due to rapid urbanisation in the city were resolved to some extent through these projects such as housing for all- increase of slums, unemployment- APSSDC job skills programme, water crisis- pipelines and water supply, traffic congestion- fly-over etc.

- In the swachsurvekshan -2017, visakhapatnam almost topped the chart ranking 3rd cleanest city among the cities of India.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- This study verified that immoderate urbanisation leads to problematic situations
- Smart cities mission enabled the cities to overcome the problems of excessive urban transformation.
- Nevertheless, it is found that most of the projects have stuck at the stage of proposal showing no signs of implementation while few are under process.

CONCLUSION

Urbanisation is inevitable scenario for any developing economy. Urbanisation absorbs more labour than that of rural economy for several reasons. Skill development is easier due to the availability of infrastructural facilities in urban areas. Traditional economy can transform into a dynamic economy. Despite, along with urbanisation, there arise few problems which can be rectified through smart city planning. For the effective implementation of smart city approach, people's cooperation with the government is a must.

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