

Pattern and Extent of Rural – Urban Migration In India

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Abstract

Urbanization is a part of the development process. The change of population from rural areas to urban areas is a strong measure of economic development. In backward stagnant societies, the process of urbanization is almost slow because cities are not able to provide employment for people living in rural areas. However, the rapid migration of rural population to cities is only for the purpose of getting employment and in this situation the emphasis is on labour intensive industries rather than capital intensive industries. In contrast, the pace of urbanization slows down when the ratio of the total water level to the urban population reaches a very high level. This situation has come to the fore in a total of 30 countries, which are called developed industrial countries. Description Physical expansion of urban areas or increase in its area, population etc. is called 'urbanization'. This is a global change. The paper tries to focus on pattern and extent of rural – urban migration.

Key-words: Migration; Pattern; Trends; Economic scenario.

Introduction

The strategy of economic reform and related development in India was formally launched in the 1990s, while it raised the hopes of capital-investment in the country, while it helped to connect less developed states like Madhya Pradesh, Bihar etc. with the national and international economy. It was argued that now domestic and foreign capital-investment will increase rapidly which will accelerate Infrastructural development and improvement of basic services along with economic growth. It was hoped that these reforms would attract investors to urban areas, as these areas have higher levels of income and ability to access services. Because of this, the population of the cities of these states will also increase. It has also been argued that industrial growth and consequently employment will mostly take place in or around these urban areas, hence the villagers will be attracted towards it. Rapid growth of population will be felt in urban areas as a result of large-scale rural-migration. Due to such development related to infrastructure and industries, new urban centers will also be formed. This will increase income and permanent employment, reduce poverty, improve living standards and upgrade overall human development.

In the current economic scenario, it is not necessary that this has happened in relatively backward states like Madhya Pradesh, Bihar etc. Urban development has also taken place in the

state and will happen in the future as well, but this has happened partly because of the ability of urban centers to attract capital-investment. One of the reasons for the increase in population in cities and towns has also been the instability of agriculture and forest based economy in the state. Both critics and staunch supporters of economic reforms seem to agree on the point that urban growth in the post-liberalization phase will be much greater in the less developed states. However, both seriously disagree on the reasons for rural-urban migration.

It can be argued that the rate of capital investment in infrastructure and improvement in providing urban amenities will not be very high in less developed states like Madhya Pradesh, Bihar due to lack of resources. Then in the last 10-15 years, under the liberalized regime, the central assistance to the states has been less than before. As a result, the economic condition of the state governments has weakened. Because of this, they have proved to be weak in the development of infrastructure services in backward areas, especially small and medium towns. However, in the last one or two years, there has been a significant increase in the central assistance to the state governments.¹ States have also improved their financial position, recovering from the problems after the implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission. However, the ability of these states to attract private capital investment by giving incentives in less developed areas has been less as compared to developed states.

If seen, in the current economic scenario, there is no pressure on private entrepreneurs to come to Madhya Pradesh and Bihar especially the backward areas of the state, due to less local constraints. Because of commercial reasons, there are now some established industrial and commercial centers other than the state capital as alternative investment destinations. In such a situation, these centers can emerge as preferred destinations for capital-investors. This will mean that these centers will now reap most of the benefits of emerging capital-market and financial intermediaries and raise resources through bonds and other forms of finance. As a result, cities and towns in less developed areas will continue to lack resources. It needs to be understood that this situation will create serious problems in infrastructure development and provision of basic services in various localities.²

This work looks at urbanization only in the form of infrastructural development. Urbanization is simply the growth of population in urban areas. This may be due to an increase in the population of existing residents or as a result of migration from rural areas. Other changes also lead to urbanization of some rural areas, where employment conditions change in such a way that traditional agriculture-based activities are converted into non-agriculture employment. In this way the density of rural population increases and takes the form of urban. This urbanization of rural areas is driven by changing employment profiles there, among other factors. Urban areas differ markedly from rural areas in respect of all basic human-development parameters. There are two main reasons for this. First, there is a clear difference between the two regions in terms of the provision of services essential for human development. Second, the

citizens of urban areas do not get the opportunity and environment to develop the basic abilities that they develop in themselves due to living there. Urban residents have easy access to schools. There are more options due to the large number of government and private schools. Basic and advanced healthcare is more accessible and of better quality in cities than in rural areas. People have the option to choose the best from government and private hospitals and doctors, specialists. The means of livelihood are also better there.³

Cities have many options open to all types of skilled and unskilled workers, including migrant and casual workers. Migrant laborers also get a place to live in the cities. Despite being informal, their organizations are very well knit and strong. Despite pressures on quality, even basic minimum facilities, such as the availability of drinking water or public distribution systems, have been shown to be more effective in cities than in villages. There is also another factor in favor of the poor class in the cities, people are settled close to each other, which makes them strong and powerful democratic lobby.⁴

The slum dwellers of the cities are also not far behind. Their numbers make them a populist force. They keep on showing their power from time to time as per the need which makes them politically influential and powerful. Educated and wealthy citizens, due to their influence on the media and proximity to politicians and bureaucrats, become so vocal that they influence policies and decision-making. This power of the urban citizens has always bent the governments and forced them to provide the basic facilities in these areas which the rural people could not even expect. Hardly any other gathering can do the same quality as the city takes care of its residents. There is speed, there is loud voice, there is economic activity, and there is livelihood. There are different types of services and there are people who give them, there is purchasing power.⁵ Even the poorest of the poor somehow manage to live there. Cities have the capacity to absorb everyone and it is increasing. There, if the population increases, then the services and facilities also increase along with it. There are also some spots on human development in these cities. Slums appear like patchwork, with very low standards of living and cleanliness. Although the residents of urban slums are simple, they have their own commitments and their own rules of social organization. But on the other hand the unemployed youth of the slums have ambitions and expectations much higher than the working class which gives rise to drug use and other evils. There is a growing 'indolence' which has serious social and political implications. In such a situation, it does not take long for organized crime groups to flourish, serious social disorder to spread and law and order to become a problem. This is the reality of urbanization and its characteristic features.⁶

Because of these characteristics, we see the city as an element of infrastructure that better serves the new citizens within its limits to adapt to it. But this urbanization is also ringing a warning bell, telling us that cities must have basic minimum human development so that not only big cities like Bhopal, Gwalior, Indore and Jabalpur pave the way for opportunities and progress

for the state and its citizens, but also smaller cities like Sehore, Narsinghpur, Betul, Rewa and Tikamgarh provide similar facilities to their citizens.

In the above context, the next part looks at the trends and patterns of large-scale migration and population growth in rural and urban areas of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. This observation has been made keeping in mind all the big and small urban centers of the state and their sections in the context of the macroeconomic strategy of globalization in the country. The third part gives an overview of the important trends of the economy, which are related to the urbanization process, income growth, poverty, malnutrition, etc. The fourth part deals with the provision of infrastructure, economic and human-development aspects and indicators of urbanization at the district level for rural and urban areas for the decade of 1980s and 1990s as well as the beginning of the current decade. In this section, an attempt has also been made to assess how the changing patterns of urbanization and provision of basic amenities including infrastructure (based on the analysis of their interdependence) are affecting the process of balanced human development in the state. The fifth part, apart from highlighting the state's response to these problems, also tells what initiatives have been taken by the government in this context. The last part envisages future development.

Demographic emerging trends and patterns of urbanization

The urban population of Madhya Pradesh is very high and is increasing continuously. About 27 percent of the state The population, which is about 1.60 crore, lives in first class cities with population above one lakh. A significant part of this population lives in Bhopal (1433875), Indore (1597441), Jabalpur (951469), Gwalior (826919), Ujjain (429933) and Ratlam (221267). The rate at which the urban population is increasing, the population living in cities with more than one lakh population will reach 25 million by the year 2021.⁷

Before independence, the rate of population growth in the state was modest. But after independence, this rate has increased which is higher than the national average. In the urban areas of the state, the rate of population growth in the last five census decades has always been above the national average, which is a matter of policy debate. It is important to examine the reasons for the growth of urban population in the context of micro and macro level changes in the economy of the state. A major demographic feature of the state is the decline in urban-growth in the 1990s. This decline was so great that over a period of time the state and national urban population growth rates became the same i.e. 2.7 per cent. It has become annual. Then, according to the provisional figures that came in the 2001 census, the rate of growth of urban population was about one percent. (Actually 0.85 per cent)² decreased, due to which the figure of urban population growth was 2.6 per cent. Which is less than the national growth rate.³ It is worth mentioning here that except Indore, Gwalior and Rewa, the growth rate in all the municipal corporations of the state decreased in the ten years 1991-2001 as compared to the previous decade. Even in the estimated population figures given in the census of India, the rate of growth of urban population is a meager 2.2 per cent. is annual.⁸

Development of urban infrastructure

Lack of infrastructure is responsible for the low economic growth and high regional disparity in the state. Transport and communication facilities here are not as well developed as in other states. Roads are well below the national average. Given the geographically central position of the state, it should have benefited the most from the railway lines. But very few railway lines here.

In urban Madhya Pradesh, according to census estimates, only 18.5 per cent of citizens had telephone facilities, compared to the national average of 23 per cent. Despite a five-fold increase in telephones over the period 1995-2004, there remains a wide gap between the state and national averages. The pace of expansion in other states has been rapid. The urban infant mortality rate in 2004 was very high, at 56 per thousand live births, compared to the national average of 40. If the state has to achieve a higher position than other states in the context of human development by minimum improvement in the quality of health of its people, then the delivery of health services has to be improved.⁹

One area in which the achievement of Madhya Pradesh looks satisfactory is the area of basic education and literacy. The state government has allocated adequate resources for education. As a result, educational institutions, school going students and the rate of literacy increased. Where in 1991, the rate of urban literacy in this state was 70.67 percent. It was 3.59 percent behind the national average, while in 2001 it was 80.3 percent of the national urban literacy.¹⁰

Conclusion

The rapid increase in the area of urbanization that this state has made is comparable to the overall national increase and at some places even surpasses it. This rapid growth puts a lot of pressure on the local bodies to provide basic amenities that enhance the quality of life. Therefore, this urbanization poses a big challenge to the state in terms of human development. So far, the state has invested more capital in the areas of roads, drinking water, sanitation, electricity etc. The government is trying to reduce the suffering of the people in these urban areas through the Backward Areas Grant Fund, and the transfer of more resources to the urban local bodies. But to improve the quality of life in the urban areas of Madhya Pradesh, the government and these bodies need to increase their efforts in urban planning, housing, drinking water, sewage disposal, sanitation, and empowerment of urban local bodies, capacity-building and institutional reforms in them.

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