

Urbanization & Covid-19 Pandemic: Causes, Consequences & Future Challenges

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Abstract

Urbanization is not simply a forefront wonder, but a rapid and notable shift of mankind's living style on a worldwide scale, whereby prevalently non-metropolitan scenario is as a rule quickly replaced by amazing metropolitan culture. Tremendous urbanization, high populace, and a high resource consumption rate of people in big cities have prompted a broad scope of nearby and worldwide socio-economic and environmental impacts that deserve focus from the human community. Continuous development and expansion or movement from rural to urban areas will broaden the number of megacities, and it shows that megacities are usually troubled by bad health, job unavailability, environmental degradation, insufficient housing, traffic jam, hovel, illegal acts, and poverty. As Corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic is expanding worldwide, due to which many countries place 'lockdown' which affects the urban economy directly on a multilateral level, including from economic and social perspectives. This paper seeks to underline the causes and effects of fast-growing urbanization and understand the consequences of the same amidst and post COVID-19 outbreak.

Keywords: Urbanization, Covid-19, megacities, urban economy, lockdown, social perspective

Introduction

Urbanization is a concept at a given set of times or in other words it can be defined as the proportion of the total population or area in cities or towns. Urban sprawl isn't just a forefront phenomenon, but a fast and notable change of human social roots on a worldwide scale, whereby dominantly (Pawan, 2016). While the planning and speed of urbanization have fluctuated and are changing between the nations, locales, and mainlands, the urbanization procedure has grabbed hold all over the place. It has demonstrated to be a relentless and a generally alluring marvel. Urban areas are the establishment of present-day human progress; they are the engine room of the financial turn of events and the focal points of culture, preoccupation, headway, preparing, data, and political for provincial culture are all things considered immediately superseded by pervasively urban culture (ADB, 2006). In 1950, urban territories comprise just 30% populace, however in 2014 about 54% populace information in urban zones. It implies that the greater part of the total populace currently lives in urban territories. Because of the United

Nations (United Nations, 2014), by 2050, about 66% of the total populace should be in urban. The growing urban population is directly proportional the number of megacities worldwide. Cities with a population greater than 10 million residents are often termed "megacities". Widely, megacities are supposed to increase from 33 in 2018 to 43 in 2030 (United Nations, 2018). In 1990, there were 10 megacities with 153 million population and were converted to 28 megacities in 2014 with 453 million population which consisted of 12% urban population of the world. Asian megacities were made of 60% of the world megacities population in 2010 (Swerts & Denis, 2015). Urbanization has been linked with the creation of jobs for millions of people and a decrease in poverty. Similarly, urbanization is transforming social fabrication and nationwide culture. It is remodifying peoples' living styles, jobs, human health, social behavior, and institutions and generating new power relationships in households, organizations, and government. It is altering peoples' living (ADB, 2006).

Urbanization practice has been associated with other

noteworthy viewpoints, for example, financial, social, condition. In light of (United Nations, 2014), urban living is frequently connected with more significant levels of proficiency and instruction, better wellbeing situation, more outstanding access to financial and social financial administrations, and upgraded open doors for social and political support. By and by, fast and spontaneous urban development just as urban extension compromises practical improvement when the fundamental framework isn't created or when strategies are not very much actualized. Spontaneous or insufficiently oversaw urban extension prompts fast spread, contamination, and ecological corruption, along with unreasonable creation and utilization designs (United Nations, 2014).

In the 21st century, hardly any patterns have coordinated the financial, ecological, and cultural effects of quick relocation. From 1950, the world's urban populace has grown just about six-overlap, from 751 million to 4.2 billion of every 2018. The most urban populace on the planet is in North America.

According to the United Nations, 2018, 55% of the absolute masses live in urban zones now every day which can be predicted up to 68% by 2050. Projections show that urbanization, the moderate move in home of the human people from provincial to urban areas, got together with the general improvement of the absolute masses could add another 2.5 billion people to urban locales by 2050, with close to 90% of this development happening in Asia and Africa. Just India, China, and Nigeria will speak to 35% of the foreseen improvement of the world's urban people someplace in the scope of 2018 and 2050. By 2050, it is foreseen that India will have included 416 million urban inhabitants, China 255 million, and Nigeria 189 million.

In the year 1951, just five urban areas are having the populace of more than one million, which increment to 53 urban communities in 2011 and it was evaluated that by 2031, it will be 70 urban communities in the nation with millions of populaces. Likewise, three urban areas are having more than 10 million populaces in the year 2011, and it was assessed that six urban areas will have 10 million populaces by 2031. In this way, it was assessed that the all-out urban populace continuously 2030 will be 610 million, which will represent 40% of the all-out populace of the nation (Sadashivam & Tabassu, 2016). Currently, as per U.N. World Urbanization Prospects 2018 report, about 34% of India's population now stays in urban areas. This reflects a rise of around three percentage points from the 2011 Census.

Somewhere in the range of 2018 and 2030, the number of inhabitants in Delhi, India is anticipated to increment by

over 10 million occupants, while that of Tokyo, Japan is anticipated to decay by very nearly 900,000. The two urban communities are along these lines expected to change puts on the rundown of the world's urban areas positioned by size. Projections demonstrate that the world's tenth biggest city in 2018—Osaka, Japan—will never again be among the ten biggest in 2030 (United Nations, 2018).

Corona viruses (CoVs) correspond to the main set of viruses mostly affecting human beings through the zoonotic transmission. In the past two decades, this is the third instance of the emergence of a novel corona virus, after severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003 and Middle East respiratory syndrome corona virus (MERS-CoV) in 2012. The repeated emergence and global scale of transmission, a significant number of deaths, infection and mortality of care providers and healthcare workers (HCWs), and a higher risk of death in vulnerable or susceptible groups, have been the major causes of concern. The process of naming the novel corona virus (2019-nCoV) which emerged in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, has created some controversies. COVID-19 has been labeled as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), and the epidemic curves are still on the rise (Chatterjee et al., 2020).

Causes & Impacts of Urbanization

Potential lack of infrastructure and employment opportunities may be the determining factors favoring the rural population to migrate to urban areas. In India, urbanization grows due to two major ways. The rise of urbanization in India is by two methods, one is by the rise in the city populace, and the second one is by the movement of people, which can be attributed to people shifting from villages, small towns to city areas and also from cities to big metropolitan (Sadashivam & Tabassu, 2016). The reasons for this migration led urbanization in India are somewhat no identical from other countries, particularly the western area, where it became exposed due to the steady progress of industrialization and urbanization together (Ryngnga, 2018).

Movement can be estimated in various manners with the two most normal types of information being occasions and advances. The previous are ordinarily connected with populace registers, which record singular moves while the last is commonly gotten from censuses looking at the spot of home at two focuses on time. Populace enlists in truth tally the movements, while the evaluation checks the vagrants. In India, it is mind-boggling to precisely distinguish vagrants since they are not obligatory to be enrolled either at their place of root or their goal (Shukla et al., 2010).

As per the data released in Census 2011, nearly 45.36 crore Indians (37 %) in India are migrants who have been settled in various parts of the country different from the earlier residence. This figure is higher than that in the year 2001 (31.45%). Increase in families and jobs are the main cause for relocation, Census data indicate. The bulk shifting occurs within individual states — among the total number of persons listed as “migrants” in the 2011 Census, only 11.91% (5.43 crore) had moved to one state to another, although 39.57 crores had resettlement within their states(Census, 2011).

However, it would be a misnomer to confuse the India migration phenomenon as a purely economic issue that now riles the world. The primary reason for migration as is borne out by the numbers shows that it is more a social phenomenon (Raghwan, 2016).

Industrialization is perhaps the utmost element to be understood in the process of urbanization. The function of industrialization involves different criteria's. In the process of industrialization and urbanization, rural to urban relocation occurs. Industrialization is an addition to urbanization phenomena by pulling a large number of rural migrants, who are compelled into cities by poverty and fewer job sources. Employment resources are generally situated in and around the urban places which captivate people from rural areas.

The industrialization has played a maximum role in the relative rise in urban population as push as well as pull factors are responsible for the run of people from villages to cities. Of the push factors, first, populace increase implies fewer occupations to go round in the conventional agrarian division. Secondly, when farming is getting modernized and outright decrease in occupations happens. In the draw factors, the most grounded one is the possibility of getting by than as a provincial laborer (Mondal, n.d.).

Many social parameters such as charm of city life, better living style, and better school/colleges, so-called upgrade of status also incline people to move to cities. In rural areas, people have to mainly look upon farming for their living. But in India farming has to depend on monsoon. In drought or natural calamities, rural people have nothing for earning. Consequently their relocation to cities.

COVID-19 Pandemic reveals the downside of urbanization

There are undoubted advantages to urban life such as more people with diverse skills in small areas, employment opportunities, easy access to entertainment and mass transportation, internet services provides take out delivery easy and many more but at the same time the downside of

urbanization has included bigger transmission of infectious diseases. For example, millions of people suffered from a terrible outbreak of cholera in the 19th century(Mclaughlin, 2020) whereas the Spanish flu in 1918 in New York and Mexico City or the Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa in 2014 left to live through marks on urban spaces. In current times, COVID-19 is again proceeding to the category of such infectious diseases (Klaus, 2020).

Since COVID-19 is not as lethal as Ebola, which had a death rate of 60%, or SARS and MERS at 30%. Despite fewer death rates, due to the higher transmission rate, it is more challenging worldwide. Quarantines work in so far as you can recognize all dangerous cases, and with COVID-19's symptoms and delayed occurrence, you can't discover it that easily. In that way, this is much more analogous to the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic, which infected 500 million and 50 million deaths (Klaus, 2020). In a long run, we must realize and retreat our priorities, particularly on the ever-growing urban population. So the question arises that whether we have prepared for such interaction of urbanization and public health (in terms of infectious disease) as it is an ever more serious subject.

In India, quarantining, social distancing, and more rigorous hand and facial hygiene practices are being used as shielding measures by people, however, in the mid of March 2020, the government of India has imposed complete lockdown of few weeks as a remedial step to prevent further transmission of COVID-19. No doubt it was a historic and strong decision of government but since then, tens of thousands of migrant workers lost their jobs, in many cases accommodation and because distress of financial and social security increased, they had no option, but to return to their relatives in villages. This sitch of migrant workers shows the increased vulnerability of disadvantaged urban populations as a result of the corona crisis (Dick, 2020). Another problem associated with migrant workers is their accommodation areas which are very dense and marginalized especially slums and informal settlements. People live in these areas very close to each other and therefore the chance of virus transmission is very high.

Economic perspective

In the last 10,000 years, human beings have become an ever more strong environmental force. With the advent of agriculture 8000 years ago we started changing the land. Also, we started to impact our environment with the Industrial revolution. The recent population growth in the world has magnified the impacts of our agricultural and economic activities. Yet global population growth has obscured what could be a far more significant human-

environmental interaction: as the population of the planet is doubling, the city populace of the world is tripling. More than half the world population will be living in urban areas over the next few years.

Urbanization and economic raise are pretty much connected, however, their effects must have some pros and cons. Economic raise generally use a process where village land is altered for urban uses, such as industrialization, living homes, and commercialization, this is a change from an agrarian-based economy to a more urban economy based on services and industry (Irwin, 2004).

Urbanization has generated incredible economic growth but growth has created tremendous inequalities. Inequity is ever rising in urban areas India has some of the worst inequity in the world with 18 of India's urban population living in slums, approximately 9 million households, and is expected to grow to million annually according to the (National Sample Survey., 2015)

Lack of available employment in combination with housing shortages has resulted in the growth of slums. It is well established that the rates of urbanization and deprivation are associated. The pandemic and consequent shutdowns have affected different industries, including MSME, civil aviation, hospitality, agriculture, and allied sector. The calamity has already reached an economic and labor market shock which has an impact not only on supply (production of goods and services) but also on-demand (consumption and investment). COVID-19 would have far-reaching consequences for labor market performance. In sum to the consequent issues about the well being of workers and their dependents, the pandemic & resulting financial shocks would affect the work in three main dimensions: 1) the number of jobs (both unemployment and underemployment); 2) the standard of work (wages and access to social protection); and 3) Impact on specific categories who are more prone to adverse labor market condition. (International Labor Organization, 2020) analyzes a considerable speed in unemployment and underemployment in the present scenario of the virus. Underemployment is also supposed to grow on a large scale.

Young persons (already facing higher rates of unemployment), older workers, insecure workers (including the self-employed, casual and gig workers), and moving workers are most susceptible to the effect of the calamity. Different countries have taken steps to minimize the effects of COVID-19 considering International Labour Standards.

Future challenges and possibilities

It will be among queries that urban organizers will confront clear strain between densification – the push towards urban communities getting progressively thought, which is showing up as the basis for an act of spontaneity of natural manageability – and disaggregation, the isolating out of populaces, which can be just technique as of now being utilized to keep down disease transmission (Shenker, 2020).

Due to increased densification, COVID-19 raises a big question mark on managing urbanization. This virus appears to be a society driven natural or environmental problem like climate change. Climate change is not only due to gases absorbing heat but also caused by many societal causes due to which greenhouse gases are released. Similarly, in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, the main cause is the virus but for management of its impact will take understanding human behavior.

Besides its sheer scale, India's other test is the thickness of its populace: 420 individuals live on each square kilometer (about 0.4 of a square mile), contrasted, and 148 for every square kilometer in China. Its urban areas are packed with ghettos and low-salary lodging bunches where the everyday environments are tight (Naqvi et al., 2020). The core logic behind the spread of this virus is that people get closer and transmit infection. This happens in homes and workplaces especially in urban areas because the dense population makes it vulnerable to the virus. The decision to complete lockdown has been taken based on the idea that less mixing can reduce a person to person transmission. But at the same time, it imposes pressure on the global economy which may cause a serious recession because lesser production causes lesser sell followed by lesser profits and ultimately reduces employment opportunities. If we wish to remote to pandemics in the future, we need to upgrade urban cities' designs and policies along with focusing on rural infrastructure based on the principle of sustainable development. If a person could get employment in his village or town he will not move to bigger cities for the same and consequently, it will reduce burden migration led urbanization.

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