

Introduction, Definition

Urbanization is no longer a phenomenon peculiar only to certain parts of the world rather it is a worldwide phenomenon. It is an important index of socio-economic structure of a region as urban centres have special role to play in its development. Urban centres being nodes of settlements are the real foci of social contacts and economic growth performing a number of important activities (Maurya, S.D. and G. Devi, 1984). Cities have always been considered the nucleus of human civilization and culture. However, they owe their existence, origin and growth to the functions they perform for themselves as well as for the areas surrounding them. However, it is the nature, types and variety of activities that make them distinct from the areas called rural.

1. CONCEPT OF URBANIZATION

The term urbanization is used by sociologists, economists, urban planners and geographers from different view points. Most of the studies relating to urbanization have been made in social, economic and demographic context. Smailes (1975) refers that "urbanization is the process whereby land and

inhabitants become urban. It refers to a change in both place and people, but in fact it has been measured and expressed chiefly in the terms of population census statistics that purport or are presumed to distinguish inhabitants of towns and cities from those of the rural countryside. Urbanization means that an increasing proportion of human society become town-folk, and as this happens towns grow in population, spread in area, and make an ever increasing impact upon the countryside, both upon its appearance and upon the life of its inhabitants. More and more of the landscape becomes townscape and people come to live in an environment that is both physically and socially urban". Thus, Smailes describes two notions of urbanization-one geographical and the other sociological which are closely related and are certainly not identical. The former relates to the place and the latter to people. The geographical concept refers to the grouping of people in concentrations that are different in size, functions and institutions from rural clusters of agricultural population where as the sociological concept relates to the distinctive way of life that differs from the agricultural life of the countryside.

of the whole population and is primarily concerned with the change in its economic structure. The demographic concept is primarily related to population concentration. Thus, however, one may consider the concept of urbanization in three way : the social, the economic, and the demographic.

(1) Social concept : The first of the three concepts is perhaps the most well known and is primarily related to Louis Wirth's writing 'Urbanism as a way of life' (Wirth, L., 1938). Wirth formulated a theory of urbanism which was based on existing knowledge of social groups. From social and cultural viewpoints urbanization means a way of life different from those of rural or country dwellers. Thus, the process of changing of behaviour patterns from rural to urban is considered as urbanization which includes qualitative and quantitative improvements in the systems of housing, water-supply, sanitation, means of transport and communication, administrative and educational institutions together with many other micro aspects of life as culture and traditions. It is only thus that the urban dwellers feel that they are urban and are living in an urban centre.

It is argued that the ideas of social change have too much relevance to be rejected although they cannot be accepted as universal. However, this concept is not applicable to quantitative evaluation and is of quite subjective nature. Likewise, the scientific testing of urbanization is not possible.

(2) Economic concept : The second concept of urbanization is economic which relates to the movement of people out of agricultural communities into other and

are set out in such a way. "Urbanization is seen therefore as a product of increasing economic specialization and advancing technology. The only way it is possible to advance from a subsistence basis is by specialization of economic activities. The linkage between specialisms necessitate the accumulation of people and this is the process of urbanization (Carter, 1975, 29).

Usually in rural areas, functions are mostly traditional (primary) but in urban centres they are more diversified. It is quite obvious that rural occupation is dominated by agriculture and its associated activities while in urban centres the main activities are manufacturing, trade, commerce, transport, communication, and so many professional, personal, official and institutional services. Thus the secondary, tertiary and quaternary activities are the characteristics of urban occupational structure.

(3) Demographic concept : The third dimension of urbanization is commonly taken in demographic sense which postulates that urbanization is a process of population concentration. Making a study of urbanization in India, Kingley Davis states that urbanization usually is said to be taking place when the proportion of total population that is residing in places defined as urban is rising or when urban population is growing at faster rate than the average rate of growth for a nation (Davis, K., 1962, 1). Ashish Bose has studied the process of urbanization in India in details. In his contention, 'urbanization in demographic sense, is an increase in the proportion of the urban population (U) to the total population (T) over a period of time. As long as U/T increases there is urbanization (Bose, A., 1973, 3).

rural to urban areas.

Thus, it is quite evident that not a single but a combined set of socio-economic and demographic factors should be used in measuring the process of urbanization in a region. Mitchell refers to urbanization as being **the process of becoming urban, moving to cities, changing from agricultural to other pursuits common to cities and corresponding changing of behaviour patterns** (Mitchell, 1969, 3). It would not be out of place to cite Prakasha Rao who had studied closely the three distinct process of urbanization in India : (a) the metropolitanization, (b) the commercialization or intermediate urbanization, and (c) rural urbanization or subsistence urbanization (Prakasha Rao, 1973). By the process of **metropolitanization** the large cities like Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad Ahmedabad etc. are emerging into metropolitan areas because of heavy migration of people from rural as well as from small and medium-size towns. In the **commercialization** or **intermediate urbanization**, small towns are entering into medium and large size towns and cities. The third process-**rural urbanization** means the formation of new towns either by natural growth of villages or by administrative or political decisions.

2. INDICATORS OF URBANIZATION

The process of urbanization has many dimensions. Various statistical indicators are used to measure the level of urbanization in a region. Following are the common indicators

most important indicator of growing urbanization. It presents the level of urbanization in a particular region. The increase of urban population in a region may be the result of (1) natural growth, (2) increase in the number of towns, and (3) migration of population from rural to urban areas.

$$\text{Level of urbanization} = \frac{\text{urban population}}{\text{total population}} \times 100$$

(3) Increase in Urban Population : If the urban population of a region is increasing, it is the indication of growing urbanization. This indicator is not much important because for growing urbanization rate of increase of urban population must be higher than rural or total population.

(4) Proportional Increase of Population of Different Urban Classes : The average size of urban centres has been used as a measure of degree of urbanization at various spatial levels. The average size of an urban centre may be computed by dividing the total urban population of the concerned region by the total number of urban centres.

By the process of rural urbanization, the number of new towns are increased mainly by the natural growth of villages. By the process of metropolitanization, large towns and big cities are emerging into metropolitan areas. In the intermediate urbanization, small towns are transforming into medium size towns and cities.

(5) Urban Density : Urban density has also been used as an indicator of level of

urbanization. Urban density is calculated by dividing the total urban population by the total area of the concerned region. Thus, the average number of urban population per square kilometre or per square mile is calculated that denote the level of urbanization in the region.

$$\text{Urban density} = \frac{\text{total urban population}}{\text{total area}}$$

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